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CONCERNING THE

# ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

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SECOND EDITION.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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To those whose interest is already so much awakened upon the subject of the divine origin of Christianity, that they feel the necessity of arriving at some certain conclusion, more than they fear any possible results to which such inquiries may lead, this attempt to contribute to the solution of the difficult question is offered.

The hypothesis, that there is a mixture of truth and fable in the four Gospels, has been admitted, in different degrees, by many critics bearing the Christian name. The same method of free investigation which led Priestley and Belsham to throw doubt upon the truth of the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, may allow other inquirers to make further excisions from the Gospel history. The reasons given by those eminent critics for proceeding so far may appear more valid than any which can be urged for stopping where they did. The right of private judgment in the separation of truth from fiction being once accorded, the precise limits which ought to be assigned to the credible portion of the miraculous narratives are far from being obvious ; and the ascertaining of these limits becomes a matter of interesting research to all who wish to know

what they are to believe or disbelieve on the subject of the Christian religion.

The following pages are the result of an investigation undertaken with this view, and pursued for some time with the expectation that, at least, the principal miraculous facts supposed to lie at the foundation of Christianity would be found to be impregnable ; but it was continued with a gradually increasing conviction that the true account of the life of Jesus Christ, and of the spread of his religion, would be found to contain no deviation from the known laws of nature, nor to require, for their explanation, more than the operation of human motives and feelings, acted upon by the peculiar circumstances of the age and country whence the religion originated.

The analysis of the four Gospels, proceeding on the admission that they may contain a mixture of truth and error, is a very complicated but not impracticable task. It is necessary to form an opinion as to the date of each writing, the general character of each author, and his peculiarities as a writer ; to institute continual comparisons between the events or discourses which he relates, and the opinions and controversies which arose subsequently to his own time ; to weigh the probability in favour of the real occurrence of a fact, considered in reference to the ascertained history of the time, with that in favour of its invention by the author or some intermediate narrator ; to consider what greater degree of weight is due to the testimony from the accordance of all, or of several of the writers ; and to ascertain whether they wrote independently, or copied from each other. By this labo-



rious method of sifting and examining, it must be admitted that it would be possible to obtain a tolerably correct history from a collection of records acknowledged to be of a very mixed character.

The doctrine of the divine inspiration, or of the unquestionable veracity, of the Gospel writers, has hitherto hindered the full application of this free method of investigation to the New Testament, on the part of believers in Christianity ; and unbelievers seem generally to have been more intent upon raising objections and cavils to the narratives as they stand, than in searching out the real truth. Hence it has frequently been observed, that no clear and intelligible account has been given of the life of Jesus Christ on simply natural grounds ; whence it has been argued, that no alternative remains but to regard him as the miraculous endowed personage presented to us in the four Gospels.

The first two chapters of this work give a sketch of conclusions formed in the manner above stated, from the study of the Old and New Testament, and of Josephus. It is admitted that some parts of this sketch cannot claim a higher character than that of plausible conjecture. The authority of the main sources of information being shaken, it is evident that conjecture is, in many cases, all to which the utmost research can attain. The whole is, however, expressed in the historical style, for the sake of simplicity ; consequently, when the reader meets with some assertions not sufficiently supported by the notes, his patience is entreated until he arrives at the chapters which follow.

The field of investigation being of almost interminable extent, the object has been rather to select a few striking points of inquiry than to exhaust the subject ; many interesting points are therefore merely glanced at, and the volume is offered more as a collection of hints than as a complete treatise on the important subject which it approaches.

The greater part of the work having been written before reference was made to the commentators mentioned in the notes, the reader, who may be versed in biblical criticism, will have to excuse in some parts an unconsciousness that the same things had already been said by others. This applies especially to the chapters on Isaiah and Daniel, much of which the author has found to be nearly the same in substance as what had been said by Porphyry, Aben Esra, Kimchi, and Grotius. But the whole is suffered to remain, because some suggestions here offered differ much from the explanations of the above, and, it is believed, of all other commentators. The attention of the student of the prophecies is directed especially to the explanation suggested of the seventh chapter of Daniel.

Although the belief in the miraculous origin of Christianity forms at present a prominent feature in the creeds of all sects of professing Christians, it would be an unnecessary and perhaps injudicious limitation to hold that the relinquishment of this belief is equivalent to an entire renunciation of the Christian religion. Whatever be men's conclusions concerning the much-debated question of the nature and powers of Jesus

Christ, no conclusions of this kind need obstruct their perception of the general excellence of the moral system which is connected with his name, nor impede their acknowledgment of the beneficial influence which the Scriptures exercise over mankind, nor lead to hostility towards the ancient and useful institutions which the sanction of Christ and his followers has caused almost universally to accompany the admission of his religion. Most of the doctrines of Christianity are admitted to be so much in accordance with the purest dictates of natural reason, that, on recognizing the latter as the supreme guide, no violent disruption of the habits and associations of the religious world is necessary. The philosophizing tone adopted by many of the most distinguished modern advocates of religion renders the transition easy from Christianity as a divine revelation to Christianity as the purest form yet existing of natural religion. The contemplation of the Creator may still be indulged, and lessons of morality and wisdom still sought, according to the forms which Christianity has consecrated. The transference of the sanction from a supposed revelation to natural reason will be so little prejudicial to these high exercises of the mind, that, on the contrary, it will extend their interest by allowing them wider scope, and by rendering them more susceptible of all the improvements which experience, circumstances, and growing intelligence, suggest. Christianity will no longer be fettered by the necessity of a continual adaptation to written precept, but will assume a position allowing it to ex-



pand freely according to the wants of each successive age, and to advance with the advancement of mankind.

The author of this volume would therefore willingly have it considered as employed in the real service of Christianity, rather than as an attack upon it. Many doctrines, which were once thought to be essential parts of the system, have been successively dismissed into the class of its corruptions ; yet, after the wound occasioned by the separation has been healed, Christianity has been found to remain still vigorous, and has even appeared more sightly as relieved from an excrescence. And now, if the progress of inquiry should lead men to carry the pruning-knife nearer to the root than they had at first contemplated, and to consign even the whole of the miraculous relations in the New Testament to the same list as the prodigies of Hindoo or Romish superstition, we may still find enough left in Christianity to maintain its name and power amidst growing knowledge and civilization. And this will be in that purer moral spirit, and those higher views of the nature of man, the progress of which, although naturally coincident with the advancement of the human mind, received so vigorous an impulse from the life of Jesus, that this spirit and these views have come to be indissolubly associated with the idea, and expressed under the name, of Christianity. Christianity, thus regarded as a system of elevated thought and feeling, will not be injured by being freed from those fables, and those views of local

or temporary interest, which hung about its origin. It will, on the contrary, be placed on a surer basis ; for it need no longer appeal for its support to the uncertain evidence of events which happened nearly two thousand years ago, a species of evidence necessarily attainable only by long and laborious research, impracticable to most men, and unsatisfactory and harassing even to those who have most means of pursuing it ; but it will rest its claims on an evidence clearer, simpler, and always at hand,—the thoughts and feelings of the human mind itself. Thus, whatever in it is really true and excellent, will meet with a ready attestation in every breast, and, in the improvement of the human mind, find an ever-increasing evidence.

*November, 1838.*

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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A RE-PERUSAL of the New Testament several times since the first edition of this work appeared, and some further acquaintance with modern criticism on the subject, have not led the writer to alter the leading conclusions then arrived at. But some important points are now dwelt upon more at length, and additional notes and quotations given where the original most required them.

In the first two chapters, it is endeavoured to mark more clearly the relationship of the Christians to the Essenes and Galileans. In the chapters on the four Gospels, an attempt is made to define more distinctly the characteristics of each; and, since to ascertain how they were formed is one of the most vital, whilst it is the most difficult and laborious, part of the subject, the writer's own remarks are accompanied by notes showing the conclusions of some of the most recent German critics, a class of writers who have worked out this subject with an industry and acuteness which have probably attained to all the certainty of which the case admits.

In chapters vii. ix. xvi. there are some additions on



the events immediately following the crucifixion, on the miracles of Jesus, and on his character.

Since the first edition of this work was published, the writer has read the celebrated *Leben Jesu* of Dr. Strauss, which contains a most minute and searching analysis of the various stories, anecdotes, and sayings, which mainly make up the Gospels; and especially a careful weighing of the probable proportion of reality and fiction in each. The present work embracing a wider scope, that important part of the subject occupies only a few chapters, which remain with little alteration. In only a few cases, and by way of example, the subject is pursued at some length; in others, for the sake of brevity, conclusions are given without arguments. The reader, who may feel that more satisfaction is justly demanded on this head, will share the pleasure which the writer felt on becoming acquainted with the elaborate and erudite work referred to. There the most extensive theological reading is brought to bear upon the subject; and this, combined with unwearied patience, and unvarying philosophical candour, leaves a strong conviction that the Gospels have been examined by minds the most competent as well as willing to give them a full and fair trial.\*

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\* It came to the knowledge of the writer in the year 1839, that a translation of his first edition had been undertaken at Stuttgart, accompanied by an introduction from the pen of Dr. Strauss, to whom he was then a total stranger, but who had seen a copy of the volume in the possession of one of his own English friends. The fact of the translation, and the contents of that introduction, must be highly gratifying to the author; yet in a higher degree they reflect praise on the eminent theologian himself, who could

The work of Dr. Strauss attributes, upon the whole, to the four Gospels, rather less of historical reality, and a larger proportion of the mythus and legend, than this volume. His opinions on the origin of the story of the resurrection, and his impressions of the views of Jesus, are somewhat different. He hesitates to ascribe to Jesus the political aim included in the Jewish notion of the Messiahship, but seems inclined to consider his views directed exclusively to spiritual dominion.\* The most important agreement is that his investigations tend to dismiss all supernaturalism from the history of Jesus. The writer learns from friends well acquainted with the progress of theological learning in Germany, that the most recent opinions of many eminent scholars there are in the same direction. Comparing this tendency in the land of biblical criticism with the large, probably increasing, amount of unbelief in all classes around us, we are compelled to anticipate that the time is near, and that the spread of independent thinking will render it nearer, when no Christianity will remain but such as expresses the results of the higher moral powers implanted in man by nature.

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take so sincere an interest in a recent English work, which at that time had found but few readers in its own country.

A review of this German translation appeared in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* of Halle, signed "Schnitzer." Some of the enlargements in the present edition partly meet the able and candid criticism which that article contained.

\* This is gathered from § lxiv., French translation of the Third Edition, by E. Littré.

Whether the degree of merit, which Christianity possesses in this sense, be so high as to entitle it to be considered pre-eminently the religion of the wise and good, and to render the duration of this distinction probable during many future centuries, it is not pretended to decide in this work. The aim has been simply to investigate the historical origin of the religion, uninfluenced by speculations on the consequences. Change of names would be a minor one ; a result of greater concern is the disturbance of cherished principles and feelings which, in the present juncture of the history of religion, the transition from supernatural creeds must to a large extent occasion ; and the contemplation of this imparts gravity to researches which at no very distant period may be generally smiled upon as both frivolous and antiquated. Yet the general conviction, that truth in the end must be beneficial, need not be shaken in this instance by an imagined foresight of some appalling consequences. The observation of many readers will probably accord with that of the author, that the Deist is not wanting in thoughts which admit of the serene enjoyment of life, of fortitude in adversity, and of perseverance in unseen efforts to do good ; that neither Deism, Pantheism, nor even Atheism, indicate modes of thought incompatible with uprightness and benevolence ; and that the real or affected horror, which it is still a prevailing custom to exhibit towards these names, would be better reserved for those of the selfish, the cruel, the bigot, and other tormentors of mankind. Although that species of



philosophy which includes a religious faith, may, in the opinion of many, probably most, earnest thinkers, be supported by the furthest advances of the intellect, and also be allied with the purest pleasures of imagination ; although it be productive of the most permanent mental tranquillity, and, in some extreme cases, may probably be indispensable to preserve fortitude ;—yet a persuasion of the deep foundations on which the religious sentiments rest, and an appreciation of their value, require neither the expression nor the feeling of alienation towards those who do not share those sentiments ; a moderate experience must convince us that theological belief, even of the simplest kind, and benevolence, do not necessarily exist in proportion to each other ; and that both a creed, and the want of one, may be met with in conjunction with that which irresistibly demands our sympathies,—a devotion to the cause of happiness on this earth.

*August, 1841.*

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AN INQUIRY  
CONCERNING THE  
ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY

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CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH, FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY  
TO THE DEATH OF JESUS.

THE Jewish nation, which was of considerable political importance in the days of David and Solomon, was much weakened, during the reigns of Ahaz and his successors, by the encroachments of the Assyrians, and extinguished, for a time, as a political power, by the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. [B. C. 588.]

But the national feeling in a people of 800 years' standing, of peculiar manners, associations, and religious worship, survives the capture of their towns; and, during each successive transportation of their tribes [B. C. 725-588], and their subsequent captivity at Babylon, the Jews consoled themselves with the hope of a speedy restoration to their own land.\*

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\* Jer. xxxii. 15, For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Houses, and fields, and vineyards, shall be possessed again in this land. xxxiii. 7, And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at first. xli. 27, But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel; for behold I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity, and Jacob shall return, and

They compensated themselves for their present insignificance with the expectation of future greatness;\* and their very sufferings were made a theme soothing to their vanity, by being considered, not as the effect of superior power on the part of their enemies, but as a paternal and corrective chastisement from their own God.†

[B. C. 536.] When Cyrus permitted the small remnant of pure Jews to re-occupy their own land, and to re-build their temple and city,‡ their most extravagant hopes seemed about to be realized. A new æra opened upon them;§ they were in the way to take rank again amongst the nations; and if this could be attained out of a state of general servi-

be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. (l. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. ; xxxix. 25; xxvii. 25; Micah ii. 12.) Tobit xiv. 5, Afterwards they shall return from all places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem gloriously, and the house of God shall be built in it for ever, with a glorious building, as the prophets have spoken thereof.

\* Obadiah 17, But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance—and there shall be holiness, and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions; 18, And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Esau for stubble;—21, And saviours shall come upon Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. Micah iv.; Micah v. 8, And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles as a lion among the beasts of the forest. Isaiah xlix. 18-26; lx. 12, For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea those nations shall be utterly wasted... The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel... thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever... a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation; I the Lord will hasten it in its time.

† Ezekiel, passim, xxxix. 23; Micah i. 5, For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. Isaiah xlii. 24, Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? xlvii. 6, I was wroth with my people, and have given them into thine (Chaldea's) hand. xlviii. 10, Behold I have refined thee (Jacob), I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. Lam. iv. 22; Hosea xiv. 1; Daniel ix. 11.

‡ By comparing Ezra i. 3, with 1 Esdras iv. 63, it is seen that the decree of Cyrus was not understood as limited to the temple.

§ Haggai ii. 9, The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former. Zech. i. 16-21; ii. 10-13.

tude, a patriotic Jew might easily believe his nation destined, in the end, to eclipse Egypt and Assyria.\*

Accordingly, in their writings about the time of the restoration, (and a large proportion of those called the prophets appear to be nearly of that date,)+ these topics occur in almost every page. The imagination and literary talents of the Jews had been much developed by their contact with the Chaldees and Persians, and naturally displayed themselves chiefly on such an exciting theme. Besides, the Jewish leaders would encourage their poets and orators to choose such subjects, in order to animate the people under difficulties.

It is not surprising, then, to find in the poetic writings of the Old Testament extravagant descriptions of a kingdom of Israel which should cover the earth,‡ and of a great prince who should restore the throne of David.§ The beautiful an-

\* Isaiah xiv. 2, Israel shall take them captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

† Haggai, B. C. 520; Zechariah, B. C. 519. Many parts of the older prophets appear to be interpolations of the same time. (See Ezek. xxxix. 23-29.) In chap. xiii. reasons will be given for considering Isaiah xl. chap. to the end, as written in the time of Cyrus.

‡ Haggai ii. 22; Zech. ii. 21; Micah iv. 5; Isaiah ii. 2; Dan. vii. 13, 14.

§ Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them. xxxvii. 22-26, And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations. . . and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, and their children's children for ever, and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. (Kimchi says upon this text, The King Messiah is called David, because he will be of the seed of David.)

Jer. xxiii. 5, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Isaiah xxxii. 1, 18, Behold a king shall reign in righteousness. . . and



ticipations which, under various forms, have arisen in widely remote nations, of the future perfection of the earth,\* were, in the minds of the Jews, blended in a peculiar manner with the hopes and fortunes of Israel. On this subject each prophet or poet indulged in his own fancies; but one prevalent notion seems to have been, that this kingdom would be established, and their final triumph over the nations effected, not so much by military means, in which they were obviously deficient, as by some special intervention of their protector, the God of Israel. It was supposed that the presence of the Deity would be then made manifest to them in a more visible manner than had been known hitherto, and that signs and wonders, more impressive and more public than those granted in the days of Moses, would at last proclaim to the whole world the connexion subsisting between God and his chosen people.† Hence this state of things came to be called

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my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings.

Jer. xxiii. 17, For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of Israel.

The kings of Judah were called the Lord's anointed; therefore the expected restorer of their throne came to be described emphatically as the Anointed or Messiah: and it became a favourite literary amusement with the Jews to find passages of their scriptures applicable to him. To find oracles of the future was more interesting than to investigate critically the history of the past. Hence many passages were applied to the Messiah which originally referred to real personages, to personifications of their nation, or to subjects still more remote. Schoettgen gives a minute account of all the texts interpreted by the ancient Rabbis concerning the Messiah. Horæ Heb. lib. 2.

\* It is not likely that Virgil had read Isaiah; yet the resemblance between the ideas in his *Pollio* and those of the Hebrew poet has struck all readers. In the *Voluspa*, a Scandinavian poem quoted in the 4th fable of the *Edda*, there is an end of the ages and a conflagration of the world, succeeded by a new earth of eternal verdure and happiness.

† Haggai ii. 6, 7, For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory Zech. ix. 13, 14, When I have bent

popularly the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven.\*

The captivity and restoration were thought of less and less as events rolled on; but the writings which they had occasioned remained amongst the Jews, a conspicuous part of their scanty literature. There is, indeed, in them so much of rich imagery and wild beauty, that they are to this day read with pleasure by those who look upon them merely as poetical relics; it is no wonder, then, that they should have continued for centuries in the hearts and mouths of all patriotic Jews, and that, when sufficiently veiled by antiquity, the prophets, as well as the law, should have been revered as divine oracles.

Events, however, did not correspond with these prophecies of Jewish greatness. With slow and painful efforts their temple and city were rebuilt under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah [B. C. 536—445]; but they remained insignificant as a nation, and were successively tributary to the Persians and Macedonians, until the revolution

Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man; and the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. Zech. xiv. 3, 4, Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east, and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. Isaiah xxiv. 23, Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. See also Zech. xii. 4-8; Zephaniah iii. 8-20; Malachi iii. iv.; Joel i. 15, ii. 27-32, iii. 1, 2, 9-21; Hosea ii. 21-23; Ezek. xxxix. 21, 22.

\* Zech. xiv. 9, And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. Ezek. xxxvii. 23, So they shall be my people, and I will be their God. xxxiv. 30, 31; Zech. viii. 8.

effected by Judas Maccabæus. [B. C. 166.] Under him and the subsequent able princes of the Asmonæan race, they attained the rank of a respectable second-rate power, although inferior to the adjoining kingdoms of Syria and Egypt. But the Asmonæan dynasty grew weak from internal dissension; and during the quarrel between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, who first imposed upon the Jews a Roman tribute. [B. C. 63.] Under the patronage of the Romans, Herod the Idumean obtained the sovereignty, [B. C. 40,] to the exclusion of the native Asmonæan family; and, although generally hateful to the Jews as a heathen and usurper, maintained by a vigorous government the respectability of the nation. After his death, [B. C. 3,] however, the Jews were compelled to make another step towards national servitude, by the appointment of Roman governors of Judea, [A. D. 6 or 7,] who exercised a jurisdiction superior to that of the family of Herod, and of the Jewish sanhedrim.

Throughout all these changes, the Kingdom of Heaven may be seen to have been from time to time a popular idea,\*

\* Tobit xiii. 15, 18, Let my soul bless God the great king. For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stone: thy walls, and towers, and battlements, with pure gold. And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl, and carbuncle, and the stones of Ophir; and all her streets shall say Alleluia!

Josephus says that the Pharisees persuaded Pheroras, Herod's brother, that he was the predicted king, who would have all things in his power. *Antiq.* xvii. 4. About B. C. 4.

Targum Micah iv. 7, (written probably in the century before Christ,) And the kingdom of Heaven shall be revealed to them on Mount Zion, from now and for ever.

In the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 2) the Kingdom is introduced without any explanation, as a well-known idea.

Josephus, *War*, vi. ch. 6. "What did most elevate them in undertaking this war [A. D. 66-70] was an ambiguous oracle found in their sacred writings, how about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The testimonies of Tacitus and Suetonius might be founded on this passage of Josephus.



and during the Roman encroachments, it revived in full force. The romantic exploits of Maccabæus had renewed the Jews' spirit of independence, and encouraged the hope that the holy nation might, at length, in its turn, succeed Assyria, Persia, and Macedonia, in the empire of the world. The period mentioned in an obscure prophecy relating to the Messiah appeared to expire near the close of the Asmonean dynasty ;\* but after waiting through the long reign of Herod, the people of God seemed about to pass into a more permanent servitude to the Gentiles. The Jewish princes and aristocracy were easily soothed into submission to their powerful masters, who allowed them to retain many of their privileges ; but the indignation of the populace broke out in continual tumults and insurrections, which the Roman governor, aided by the priests and nobles, usually quickly suppressed. In one of these, soon after the accession of Archelaus, the multitude of Galileans, Idumeans, and provincials from beyond Jordan, assembled at Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, succeeded in distressing the Roman legion under Sabinus to such a degree, as to give the idea that by a simultaneous effort the Romans might be overcome. This attempt was followed by the revolts of Judas the son of Ezekias at Sepphoris in Galilee, of Simon the slave of Herod, of Athronges, and many other adventurers, assuming the title of king, which the populace were ready to allow to almost any one having

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\* The seventy weeks of Daniel, ix. 24, ended B. C. 46, counting from the decree of Cyrus. This would lead the Jews about that time to look more earnestly for their Messiah. The direct evidence of this application of the prophecy at that time is not very ample ; but Schoettgen has collected enough from the Talmudists to strengthen very materially the vague testimony of Josephus, and the intrinsic probability. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. i. "Our Rabbins delivered ; In that *week*, when the Son of David cometh, and in his first year, that will be fulfilled which is written Amos iv. 7, &c." See De Messiâ in Dan. ix. 24.

the courage to claim it.\* But the most remarkable insurrection was that of Judas the Galilean or Gaulonite, who persuaded the Galileans to resist an extraordinary taxation imposed by Cyrenius, the Roman Governor of Syria.

The account which we have of Judas the Galilean comes from Josephus, who, being himself a noble and a conservative, disliked all attempts at insurrection and innovation; yet through his angry comments it is easy to perceive that Judas was a man of great talent, and that he left a deep impression on the minds of his countrymen; for he is characterized as being not only the leading revolter against the Romans, but also the head of a fourth philosophic sect, which occasioned the alteration of the customs of Moses,† and, though agreeing with most of the pharisaic notions of religion, had an inviolable attachment to liberty, saying that God was to be their only ruler and lord. Judas was therefore both a political and religious reformer; and as his sentiments spread extensively among the Galileans, these provincials came to be looked upon with suspicion by the Romans for their disaffection to the tribute, and by the other Jews for their liberalism or heresy in religion.

Even before the time of Judas, the Jews had begun to

\* “ And now Judea was full of robberies; and as the several companies of the seditious lighted upon any one to head them, he was created a king immediately, in order to do mischief to the public.”—*Ant.* xvii. 10.

† Less stress should be laid upon this as a characteristic of the party of Judas, than upon the next-mentioned doctrine. The passage of Josephus, which will be quoted, might signify that Judas occasioned the alteration of the ancient customs, *indirectly*, by the fatal consequences of his other main doctrines, rather than by inculcating directly the abrogation of the Mosaic law. Yet the accusation itself, and the complaint of the great novelty of Judas's teaching, may warrant the conjecture that there was something in it which was considered as opposed to the permanence of the Mosaic code. The conduct of the Zealots, Sicarii, and other ferocious bandits, into whom the followers of Judas degenerated in later times, was marked by frequent instances of disrespect to the law. *War*, iv. 3, 6; iv. 5, 5; iv. 6, 3; vii. 8, 1.

allow themselves free discussion on the subject of their religion. The system of Moses, intended for a secluded people, was found to be inconsistent, in many points, with the spirit of the age, when they were forced into continual contact with other nations. From the restoration of the laws of Moses by Maccabæus, all the efforts of the strict Mosaic party were unable to stop the influx of the customs and notions of the Greeks, and to prevent the admixture of Gentile philosophies with the law and the prophets. As early as in the priesthood of Jonathan Apphus, [B. C. 161,] the Jews were divided into three principal sects of Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes, of which the latter, consisting chiefly of the lower ranks, presents a remarkable picture of simplicity and moral purity, tinctured by the austere spirit of monachism. The principles of benevolence, morality, and religion, being implanted in the nature of man, it is natural that some of those combinations for common objects which men love to form together, should be directed to the cultivation and advancement of these principles. Hence there have frequently been seen, in different ages of the world, societies attempting to exhibit schools of perfect virtue, and to attain the highest possible degrees of temperance, benevolence, and piety. In the Essene sect we see an example of such a society influenced by a religion of Monotheism, and by the national literature already described. The condition of the three sects, and especially of the Essenes, forms such an interesting and important feature in the Jewish history at the period we are now arrived at, that it is worth while to transcribe the accounts of them given by Josephus and Philo.

Josephus says, (*War*, ii. ch. 7,) "For there are three philosophical sects among the Jews. The followers of the first of whom are the Pharisees, of the second the Sadducees, and the third sect, which pretends to a severer discipline, is

called *Essenes*. These are Jews by birth, and they cherish mutual love beyond other men. They reject pleasure as evil; and they look upon temperance and a conquest over the passions as the greatest virtue. There prevails among them a contempt of marriage; but they receive the children of others, and educate them as their own, while yet tender and susceptible of instruction. They do not indeed abolish the marriage institution, as being necessary to perpetuate the succession of mankind; but they guard against the immorality of the women, who, they think, in no instance preserve their fidelity to one man.

“The Essenes despise riches, and are so liberal as to excite our admiration. Nor can any be found amongst them who is more wealthy than the rest; for it is a law with them, that those who join their order should distribute their possessions among the members, the property of each being added to that of the rest, as being all brethren. They deem oil as a pollution, and wipe it off, should any inadvertently touch them, for they think it an ornament to be plain, and always to wear white apparel. They appoint stewards to superintend the common interests; and these have no other employment than to consult the good of each member without distinction.

“This sect is not confined to one city, but many of them dwell in every city, and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go in to such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. For which reason they carry nothing with them when they travel into remote parts, though still they take their weapons with them for fear of thieves. Accordingly there is, in every city where they live, one appointed particularly to take care of strangers, and to provide garments and other necessities for



them. But the habit and management of their bodies is such as children use who are in fear of their masters. Nor do they allow of the change of garments, or of shoes, till they be first entirely torn to pieces, or worn out by time. Nor do they either buy or sell anything to one another; but every one of them gives what he hath to him that wanteth it, and receives from him again in lieu of it what may be convenient for himself: and although there be no requital made, they are fully allowed to take what they want of whomsoever they please.

“And as for their piety towards God, it is very extraordinary; for before sun-rising they speak not a word about profane matters, but put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers, as if they made a supplication for its rising. After this, every one of them is sent away by their curators, to exercise some of their arts wherein they are skilled, in which they labour with great diligence till the fifth hour. After which they assemble themselves together again into one place; and when they have clothed themselves in white veils, they then bathe their bodies in cold water. And after this purification is over, they every one meet together in an apartment of their own, into which it is not permitted to any of another sect to enter; while they go, after a pure manner, into the dining-room, as into a certain holy temple, and quietly set themselves down; upon which the baker lays them loaves in order; the cook also brings a single plate of one sort of food, and sets it before every one of them; but a priest says grace before meat, and it is unlawful for any one to taste of the food before grace is said. The same priest, when he hath dined, says grace again after meat: and when they begin and when they end, they praise God, as him that bestows their food upon them; after which they lay aside their (white) garments, and betake

themselves to their labours again till the evening ; then they return home to supper, after the same manner ; and if there be any strangers there, they sit down with them. Nor is there ever any clamour or disturbance to pollute their house, but they give every one leave to speak in their turn ; which silence, thus kept in their house, appears to foreigners like some tremendous mystery, the cause of which is that perpetual sobriety they exercise, and the same settled measure of meat and drink that is allotted to them, and that such as is abundantly sufficient for them.

“ And truly as for other things, they do nothing but according to the injunction of their curators : only these two things are done among them at every one’s own free will, which are, to assist those who want it, and to show mercy ; for they are permitted of their own accord to afford succour to such as deserve it when they stand in need of it, and to bestow food on those who are in distress ; but they cannot give anything to their kindred without the curators. They dispense their anger after a just manner, and restrain their passion. They are eminent for fidelity, and are the ministers of peace ; whatsoever they say also is firmer than an oath : but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury ; for they say, that he who cannot be believed without (swearing by) God is already condemned. They also take great pains in studying the writings of the ancients, and choose out of them what is most for the advantage of their soul and body ; and they inquire after such roots and medicinal stones as may cure their distempers.

“ But now if any one hath a mind to come over to their sect, he is not immediately admitted, but he is prescribed the same method of living which they use for a year, while he continues excluded ; and they give him a small hatchet, and the forementioned girdle, and the white garment. And

when he hath given evidence, during that time, that he can observe their temperance, he approaches nearer to their way of living, and is made a partaker of the waters of purification : yet is he not even now admitted to live with them ; for after this demonstration of his fortitude, his temper is tried two years more, and, if he appears to be worthy, they then admit him into their society. And before he is allowed to touch their common food, he is obliged to take tremendous oaths, that, in the first place, he will exercise piety towards God ; and then that he will observe justice towards men ; and that he will do no harm to any one, either of his own accord, or by the command of others ; that he will always hate the wicked, and be assistant to the righteous ; that he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority, because no one obtains the government without God's assistance ; and if he be in authority, he will at no time whatever abuse his authority, nor endeavour to outshine his subjects, either in his garments or any other finery ; that he will be perpetually a lover of truth, and propose to himself to reprove those that tell lies ; that he will keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains ; and that he will neither conceal any thing from those of his own sect, nor discover any of their doctrines to others, no, not though any one should compel him so to do at the hazard of his life. Moreover he swears to communicate their doctrines to no one any other-wise than as he received them himself ; that he will abstain from robbery, and will equally preserve the books belonging to their sect, and the names of the angels. These are the oaths by which they secure their proselytes to themselves.

“ But for those that are caught in any heinous sins, they cast them out of their society ; and he who is thus separated from them does often die after a miserable manner ; for as he is bound by the oath he hath taken, and by the customs

he hath been engaged in, he is not at liberty to partake of that food that he meets with elsewhere, but is forced to eat grass, and to famish his body with hunger till he perish ; for which reason they receive many of them again when they are at the last gasp, out of compassion to them, as thinking the miseries they have endured till they came to the very brink of death to be a sufficient punishment for the sins they had been guilty of.

“ But in the judgments they exercise they are most accurate and just ; nor do they pass sentence by the votes of a court that is fewer than a hundred. And as to what is once determined by that number, it is unalterable. What they most of all honour, after God himself, is the name of their legislator, whom, if any one blaspheme, he is punished capitally. They also think it a good thing to obey their elders, and the major part. Accordingly, if ten of them be sitting together, no one of them will speak while the other nine are against it. Moreover, they are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labours on the seventh day ; for they not only get their food ready the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not remove any vessel out of its place.

“ Now, after the time of their preparatory trial is over, they are parted into four classes ; and so far are the juniors inferior to the seniors, that if the seniors should be touched by the juniors, they must wash themselves, as if they had intermixed themselves with the company of a foreigner. They are long-lived also ; insomuch that many of them live above a hundred years, by means of the simplicity of their diet ; nay, as I think, by means of the regular course of life they observe also. They condemn the miseries of life, and are above pain, by the generosity of their mind. And as for death, if it will be for their glory, they esteem it better than



living always; and indeed our war with the Romans gave abundant evidence what great souls they had in their trials, wherein, although they were tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, and went through all kinds of instruments of torment, that they might be forced either to blaspheme their legislator, or to eat what was forbidden them, yet they could not be made to do either of them, no, nor once to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear; but they smiled in their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted the torments upon them, and resigned up their souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again.

“ For their doctrine is this: That bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever; and that they come out of the most subtile air, and are united to their bodies as in prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement; but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward. And this is like the opinion of the Greeks, that good souls have their habitations beyond the ocean, in a region that is neither oppressed with storms of rain or snow, or with intense heat, but that this place is such as is refreshed by the gentle breathing of a west wind, that is perpetually blowing from the ocean; while they allot to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den, full of never-ceasing punishments. And indeed the Greeks seem to me to have followed the same notion, when they allot the islands of the blessed to their brave men, whom they call heroes and demi-gods; and to the souls of the wicked, the region of the ungodly, in Hades, where their fables relate that certain persons, such as Sisyphus, and Tantalus, and Ixion, and Tityus, are punished; which is built on this first supposition, that souls are immortal; and thence are those exhortations

to virtue and dehortations from wickedness collected ; whereby good men are bettered in the conduct of their life, by the hope they have of reward after their death, and whereby the vehement inclinations of bad men to vice are restrained by the fear and expectation they are in, that, although they should lie concealed in this life, they should suffer immortal punishment after their death. These are the divine doctrines of the Essenes about the soul, which lay an unavoidable bait for such as have once had a taste of their philosophy.

“ There are also those among them who undertake to foretell things to come by reading the holy books, and using several sorts of purifications, and being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets ; and it is but seldom that they miss in their predictions.

“ Moreover, there is another order of Essenes, who agree with the rest as to their way of living, and customs, and laws, but differ from them in the point of marriage, as thinking that by not marrying they cut off the principal part of human life, which is the prospect of succession ; nay, rather, that if all men should be of the same opinion, the whole race of mankind would fail.”

Josephus, in another place, gives a concise account of the Essenes, thus :—

“ The doctrine of the Essenes is this : That all things are best ascribed to God. They teach the immortality of souls, and esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for ; and when they send what they have dedicated to God into the temple, they do not offer sacrifices, because they have more pure lustrations of their own ; on which account they are excluded from the common court of the temple, but offer their sacrifices themselves ; yet is their course of life better than that of other men, and they entirely

addict themselves to husbandry. It also deserves our admiration, how much they exceed all other men that addict themselves to virtue, and this in righteousness; and indeed to such a degree, that as it hath never appeared among any other men, neither Greeks, nor barbarians, no, not for a little time, so hath it endured a long while among them. This is demonstrated by that institution of theirs, which will not suffer anything to hinder them from having all things in common; so that a rich man enjoys no more of his own wealth than he who hath nothing at all. There are about four thousand men that live in this way, and neither marry wives, nor are desirous to keep servants, as thinking the latter tempts men to be unjust, and the former gives the handle to domestic quarrels; but as they live by themselves, they minister one to another. They also appoint certain stewards to receive the incomes of their revenues, and of the fruits of the ground; such as are good men and priests, who are to get their corn and their food ready for them. They none of them differ from others of the Essenes in their way of living, but do the most resemble those Dacæ who are called Polistæ (dwellers in cities).”—*Antiq.* xviii. c. 1.

Philo gives a more minute account of the Essenes, and in a still more panegyrical style. The following are a few extracts:—

“Palestine and Syria are not unproductive of honourable and good men, but are occupied by numbers, not inconsiderable, compared even with the very populous nation of the Jews. These, exceeding four thousand, are called Essenes, which name, though not, in my opinion, formed by strict analogy, corresponds in Greek to the word ‘holy.’ For they have attained the highest holiness in the worship of God, and that not by sacrificing animals, but by cultivating purity of heart. They live principally in villages. Some cultivate the

ground; others pursue the arts of peace, and such employments as are beneficial to themselves without injury to their neighbours. They are the only people who, though destitute of money and possessions, felicitate themselves as rich, deeming riches to consist in frugality and contentment. Among them no one manufactures darts, arrows, or weapons of war. They decline trade, commerce, and navigation, as incentives to covetousness; nor have they any slaves among them, but all are free, and all in their turn administer to others. They condemn the owners of slaves as tyrants, who violate the principles of justice and equality.

“As to learning, they leave that branch of it which is called logic, as not necessary to the acquisition of virtue, to fierce disputants about words; and cultivate natural philosophy only so far as respects the existence of God and the creation of the universe: other parts of natural knowledge they give up to vain and subtle metaphysicians, as really surpassing the powers of man. But moral philosophy they eagerly study, conformably to the established laws of their country, the excellence of which the human mind can hardly comprehend without the inspiration of God.

“These laws they study at all times, but more especially on the Sabbath. Regarding the seventh day as holy, they abstain on it from all other works, and assemble in those sacred places which are called *Synagogues*, arranging themselves according to their age, the younger below his senior, with a deportment grave, becoming, and attentive. Then one of them, taking the *Bible*, reads a portion of it, the obscure parts of which are explained by another more skilful person. For most of the Scriptures they interpret in that symbolical sense which they have zealously copied from the patriarchs; and the subjects of instruction are piety, holiness, righteousness; domestic and political economy; the



knowledge of things really good, bad, and indifferent; what objects ought to be pursued, and what to be avoided. In discussing these topics, the ends which they have in view, and to which they refer as so many rules to guide them, are the love of God, the love of virtue, and the love of man. Of their love to God they give innumerable proofs by leading a life of continued purity, unstained by oaths and falsehoods, by regarding him as the author of every good, and the cause of no evil. They evince their attachment to virtue by their freedom from avarice, from ambition, from sensual pleasure; by their temperance and patience; by their frugality, simplicity, and contentment; by their humility, their regard to the laws, and other similar virtues. Their love to man is evinced by their benignity, their equity, and their liberality, of which it is not improper to give a short account, though no language can adequately describe it.

“In the first place, there exists among them no house, however private, which is not open to the reception of all the rest, and not only the members of the same society assemble under the same domestic roof, but even strangers of the same persuasion have free admission to join them. There is but one treasure, whence all derive subsistence; and not only their provisions, but their clothes are common property. Such mode of living under the same roof, and of dieting at the same table, cannot, in fact, be proved to have been adopted by any other description of men.

“The sick are not despised or neglected, but live in ease and affluence, receiving from the treasury whatever their disorder or their exigencies require. The aged, too, among them, are loved, revered, and attended as parents by affectionate children; and a thousand hands and hearts prop their tottering years with comforts of every kind. Such are the champions of virtue, which philosophy, without the parade of

Grecian oratory, produces, proposing, as the end of their institutions, the performance of those laudable actions which destroy slavery, and render freedom invincible.

“This effect is evinced by the many powerful men who rise against the Essenes in their own country, in consequence of differing from them in principles and sentiments. Some of these persecutors, being eager to surpass the fierceness of untamed beasts, omit no measure that may gratify their cruelty ; and they cease not to sacrifice whole flocks of those within their power ; or, like butchers, to tear their limbs in pieces, until themselves are brought to that justice, which superintends the affairs of men. Yet not one of these furious persecutors has been able to substantiate any accusation against this band of holy men. On the other hand, all men, captivated by their integrity and honour, unite with them as those who truly enjoy the freedom and independence of nature, admiring their communion and liberality, which language cannot describe, and which is the surest pledge of a perfect and happy life.”

Philo then describes the Essenes who embraced the *contemplative life*, and were called Therapeutæ, or healers, because they professed to cure men’s minds of vices and all disorders. “The persons who profess this art are seized by the love of heaven, being filled with enthusiasm to see the supreme object of desire. Thinking themselves already dead to the world, they desire only a blessed immortal existence. They appoint their heirs, and flee without a look behind, bidding farewell to brothers, sons, parents, and wives. They fix their habitations on the outside of cities, in gardens and villages, not from a religious hatred of mankind, but to avoid a pernicious intercourse with those who differ from them in opinions and manners. This society now prevails throughout the habitable earth, but more particularly in Egypt, about

Alexandria, and beyond the lake Maria. In each house is an apartment called a sanctuary or monastery, into which they bring only the laws, the divinely inspired prophets, the psalms, with such other writings as enlarge their knowledge and perfect their piety. The idea of God is ever present to their thoughts, so that their imagination dwells, even in sleep, upon the beauty of his attributes; many of them therefore deliver magnificent visions, suggested by their sacred philosophy in the hours of repose... They spend the whole interval from morning to evening in religious exercises, reading the holy scriptures, and unfolding their symbolical meaning according to that mode of interpretation which they have derived from their fathers. For the words, they conceive, though expressing a literal sense, convey also a figurative sense addressed to the understanding. They possess also the commentaries of those sages who, being the founders of the sect, left behind them numerous monuments of the allegorical style. These they use as models of allegory and composition; and compose in honour of God psalms and hymns, in all the variety of measures which the solemnity of religion admits... On the seventh day, having collected into one assembly, one of the elders addresses them with grave looks, being not desirous to display powers of language, but to express moral truths thoroughly digested, so as to remain lasting principles of conduct... They eat no food more costly than coarse bread seasoned with salt, to which the more delicate add hyssop; and drink no liquid but the clear water of the stream. Their chief object is to practise humility, being convinced that as falsehood is the root of pride, freedom from pride is the offspring of truth."\*

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\* Philo being an elderly man, and of established reputation for learning, when he was sent at the head of the embassy from the Alexandrian Jews to Caligula, A. D. 39, or 40, his book was most likely written before that time. It

The chief features of the sect of the *Pharisees* were, their maintenance of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, their adoption of an oral law preserved by tradition, in addition to the written law of Moses, and their profession of superior sanctity, evidenced by many self-imposed austerities. In this last respect, they somewhat resembled the *Essenes*; but with this striking difference, that whilst the latter simple and lowly sect did in earnest sincerity renounce the more glaring vanities of life, and endeavour to find their highest good in the practice of virtue and the contemplation of heaven, the *Pharisees* skilfully made their spiritual tendencies the means of securing also more firmly the advantages of earth. During the greater part of the *Asmonean* reigns,\* they had been the predominant party in the state, and the long tenure of power had rendered the tact of the politician a more real determining influence with them, than the zeal of the bigot, or at least accustomed them readily to restrain this zeal within the limits dictated by policy or interest. Hence the efforts of this party during the Roman domination

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is therefore not probable that he was describing the followers of Jesus under the title of *Essenes*. His description certainly cannot be limited to them; for he evidently speaks of the *Essenes* as of an old established sect, and in one place mentions their *ancient* leaders. Josephus says, distinctly, that the sect existed in the time of Jonathan Apphus, B. C. 161. *Antiq.* xiii. 5, 9. Prideaux shows that they were probably descended from the *Assideans*, who devoted themselves voluntarily to the law. 1 Mac. ii. 42. Pliny speaks of the *Essenes* as of a sect who renewed their numbers without marriage by the reception of new comers; "and thus for several thousands of years, this people is perpetually propagated without any being born among them."—Lib. 5, cap. 17. See *Prid. Conn.* part ii. book 5. All that has been said in later times concerning the *Essenes* and *Therapeutæ*, proceeds from the extracts from Philo, Josephus, and Pliny.

Among the Jews, a man was called old at the age of seventy. Pirke Aboth, cap. v.

\* In the first part of the reign of John Hyrcanus, *Antiq.* xiii. 10; in that of Alexander Jannæus, xiii. 15; of Alexandra, xiii. 16; of Herod, xv. 1; xvii. 2; and doubtless to a great extent during the intervals.



were generally conservative;\* they might recognize as speculative truth whatever could be deduced from the law and the prophets, but took care not to be led by any arguments of this kind to countenance acts which in ordinary calculation might entail their own ruin and that of the nation.†

The *Sadducees* seem to have been a small body of free-thinkers, amongst the highest ranks, unpopular on account of their tenets, or want of tenets, of haughty and uncconciliating demeanour, and almost devoid of either religious or political zeal. Hence, although sometimes from their rank occupying the highest dignities, their influence with the people was so feeble, that when men of this sect entered into public stations, they not unfrequently conformed in appearance to the Pharisaic sect. (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, 4; xiii. 10, 6.) They rejected all the unwritten traditions which the Pharisees

\* "The Pharisees are for the exercise of concord and regard for the public."—*War*, ii. 8, 14. They endeavoured to pacify the people under Florus. *War*, ii. 17, 3.

† According to Josephus, himself a Pharisee, they were for the most part a very reasonable and moderate sect. "On account of which doctrines (future rewards and punishments) they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people; and whatsoever they do about divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction; insomuch that the cities gave great attestations to them on account of their entire virtuous conduct, both in the actions of their lives, and their discourses also."—*Antiq.* xviii. 1, 1. See also xiii. 10, 6. On one occasion however, viz. in relating an incident in the reign of Herod, he gives them a more unfavourable character. "There was a certain sect of men that were Jews, who valued themselves highly upon the exact skill they had in the law of their fathers, and made men believe they were highly favoured by God, by whom this set of women were inveigled. They are those that are called the sect of the Pharisees, who were in a capacity of greatly opposing kings. A cunning sect they were, and soon elevated to a pitch of open fighting and doing mischief."—*Antiq.* xvii. 2, 4. This was at a comparatively early period, about 15 years B. C.; afterwards their own important share in the burden of government probably moderated their restlessness. From these several allusions to the Pharisees by the same writer, it may be seen how naturally they might be represented, by partisans, as models of virtue, and by opponents, as intriguing hypocrites.

had added to the law, and disbelieved a future state. They seem to have admitted no more belief than was strictly required by the ancient and legal Jewish creed, viz. acknowledgment of Jehovah, and obedience to the written law of Moses. Yet they were not averse to free metaphysical inquiry in the schools.

The introduction of a *fourth sect* by Judas the Galilean, so important in the estimation of Josephus, from the extent to which it spread, and the results which it occasioned, as to warrant the most impassioned language in speaking of its rise, is a very remarkable feature at this point of Jewish history. I quote all that Josephus says concerning it. After relating that Coponius was sent as the first Roman procurator, he says, "Moreover Cyrenius (the president of Syria,) came himself into Judea, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance and to dispose of Archelaus's money; but the Jews, although at the beginning they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did they leave off any farther opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazar, who was the son of Boethus, and high priest. So they, being overpersuaded by Joazar's words, gave an account of their estates, without any dispute about it; yet there was one Judas, a Gaulonite, of a city whose name was Gamala, who, taking with him Sadduc, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt, who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty; as if they could procure them happiness and security for what they possessed, and an assured enjoyment of still greater good, which was that of the honour and glory they would thereby acquire for magnanimity. They also said that God would not otherwise be assisting to them, than upon their joining with one another in such councils as might be successful, and for their own ad-

vantage ; and this especially, if they would set about great exploits, and not grow weary in executing the same ; so men received what they said with pleasure, and this bold attempt proceeded to a great height. All sorts of misfortunes also sprang from these men, and the nation was infected with this doctrine to an incredible degree ; one violent war came upon us after another, and we lost our friends, who used to alleviate our pains ; there were also very great robberies and murders of our principal men. This was done in pretence indeed for the public welfare, but in reality for the hopes of gain to themselves ; whence arose seditions, and from them murders of men, which sometimes fell upon those of their own people, (by the madness of these men towards one another, while their desire was that none of the adverse party might be left,) and sometimes on their enemies ; a famine also coming upon us, reduced us to the last degree of despair, as did also the taking and demolishing of cities ; nay, the sedition at last increased so high, that the very temple of God was burnt down by their enemy's fire. Such were the consequences of this, that the customs of our fathers were altered, and such a change was made, as added a mighty weight towards bringing all to destruction, which these men occasioned by thus conspiring together ; for Judas and Sadduc, who *excited a fourth philosophic sect* among us, and had a great many followers therein, filled our civil government with tumults at present, and laid the foundation of our future miseries, by this *system of philosophy, which we were before unacquainted withal* ; concerning which I shall discourse a little, and this the rather, because the infection which spread thence among the younger sort, who were zealous for it, brought the public to destruction."

His description of the other three sects follows here, after which he returns to speak of Judas thus : "But of the fourth

sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty; and say that God is to be their only ruler and Lord (evidently the equivalent of the 'Kingdom of God, or of Heaven'). They also do not value dying any kind of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man Lord; and since this immoveable resolution of theirs is well known to a great many, I shall speak no farther about that matter; nor am I afraid that anything I have said of them should be disbelieved, but rather fear, that what I have said is beneath the resolution they show when they undergo pain; and it was in Gessius Florus's\* time that the nation began to grow mad with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the abuse of his authority, and to make them revolt from the Romans; and these are the sects of Jewish philosophy."—*Antiq.* xviii. 1. In the corresponding part of his history of the wars, he gives a more brief account thus: "And now the part of Judea belonging to Archelaus was reduced into a province, and Coponius, one of the equestrian order among the Romans, was sent as a procurator, having the power of life and death put into his hands by Cæsar. Under his administration it was that a certain Galilean, named Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar

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\* Josephus evidently means that it was in the time of Florus that the notions with which Judas had begun to infect the nation 58 years previously, and which had been growing to maturity, first showed their fruits in general insurrection.



sect of his own, and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders." \*

From these fragmentary accounts, it appears very clear that the most distinguishing feature of the new sect of Judas, was the revival in a more emphatic manner of the ancient tra-

\* The other incidental notices which I can find in Josephus respecting Judas are as follows :—

*Antiq.* xx. 5, 2. In giving the history of the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander, (A. D. 46—48,) he says, "And besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews, as we have shown in a foregoing book. The names of those sons were James and Simon, whom Alexander commanded to be crucified."

*War*, ii. 17, 8. In relating the beginning of the war about A. D. 66, he mentions the sedition and death of "one Manahem the son of Judas that was called the Galilean, who was a very cunning sophister, and had formerly reproached the Jews under Cyrenius, that after God they were subject to the Romans." *War*, vii. 8, 1. "It was one Eleazar, a potent man, and the commander of these Sicarii, that had seized upon it (the fortress of Masada). He was a descendant from that Judas who had persuaded abundance of the Jews, as we have formerly related, not to submit to the taxation when Cyrenius was sent into Judea to make one; for then it was that the Sicarii got together against those that were willing to submit to the Romans, and treated them in all respects as if they had been their enemies, both by plundering them of what they had, by driving away their cattle, and by setting fire to their houses: for they said that they differed not at all from foreigners, by betraying, in so cowardly a manner, that freedom which Jews thought worthy to be contended for to the utmost, and by owning that they preferred slavery under the Romans before such a contention."

R. Mardochæus, in *Notitiâ Karæorum*, p. 32, ex versione J. C. Wolfii, says:

"R. Azarias writes that in some places which we have cited, Josephus mentions a fourth sect, which is that of Judas the Gaulonite, sprung from Galilee, of whom mention is made among the Christians at the end of the fifth chapter of Acts of the Apostles, who adopted the opinions of the Pharisees, but with this addition, that no yoke whatever of an earthly kingdom was to be submitted to, but only of the Kingdom of Heaven. On that account all his followers exposed themselves to death, to exile, and to every kind of calamity rather than undergo the yoke of any earthly king or ruler."—*Schoett. Horæ Heb. in Act.* v.

Basnage speaks very briefly of Judas, and says, "The Romans sent some forces against Judas, and he miserably perished."—vi. 9. 8. But he does not give his authority for this, which is rather more than we find in Josephus, or in the Acts.

ditionary expectation of a Kingdom of God, or of Heaven. He taught that men should regard God as their only ruler and Lord, and despise the apparent strength of the hateful foreigners, since God who had so often delivered his people, would be able to protect them again, if they were not wanting to themselves. He called into new life the slumbering hopes of Israel, and bid him endeavour to regain the glories of his long-lost theocracy, which might possibly be destined to reappear speedily, and in splendour proportionate to its present obscurity, provided only the nation would perform its own part.

It were much to be wished that we had some further account of the brave Judas, than the fragments of the Romanized Pharisee Josephus. It seems that he was not only a teacher, but that he headed an armed revolt of some magnitude.\* Josephus does not mention his fate, but it was probably the usual one of insurgents against the Romans, since we find that the taxation was soon afterwards universally submitted to, and that his two sons, James and Simon, were crucified under the procuratorship of Tiberius Alexander.

After the failure of the revolt of Judas the Galilean, (about A. D. 8,) the Jewish populace ceased, during an interval of about twenty-five years, to attempt any important armed resistance to the Romans;† and the people became in a great

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\* The expression "revolter" applied to him by Josephus agrees with Acts v. 37. "After this man, rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." Nevertheless it is singular that Josephus should in both places confine himself to describing the doctrine of Judas and its consequences, and omit all details respecting his revolt.

† The revolt of Judas occurred in the procuratorship of Coponius, A. D. 6 to 10. He was succeeded by Marcus Ambivius, A. D. 10, Annius Rufus 13, Valerius Gratus 15, Pontius Pilate 26. The procuratorships of the three former seem to have been tolerably tranquil, since Josephus passes over them with a very slight notice. *Antiq.* xviii. 2. He mentions two trifling

measure habituated to the yoke, which under the first procurators was probably not more oppressive than that of the Idumean princes;\* but his precepts and example had left among the more ardent Jewish spirits, and especially among the hardy population of Galilee, a deep-rooted sense of the national degradation, and an unquenchable desire of release. These feelings found a partial vent in the anticipation of the miraculous deliverance promised by the prophets. In the chief towns, open displays even of this spirit were repressed by the Roman officers, and their allies the Jewish princes, as a dangerous symptom,† but it continued to break forth from time to time in the villages and country places. A passage of the prophet Malachi had announced that Elijah was to appear again previously to the divine intervention of the God of Israel. An enthusiast of the Essene sect, named John, assumed the dress and manners of the expected prophet,‡ and

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disturbances under Pilate, the first on his attempting to form a water-course with the sacred treasure called Corban (chap. iii.; and *War*, ii. chap. x.), the second on the attempt of an enthusiast to assemble a multitude on Mount Gerizim.

\* See the complaints of the Jewish ambassadors against Herod and Archelaus, during the government of the latter, and their petition to have Roman presidents instead of kings; a repetition of which complaints led to the deposition of Archelaus. *Antiq.* xvii. 11.

† Josephus says of the last-mentioned pretender, "He was one who thought lying a thing of little consequence, and contrived every thing so that the multitude might be pleased: so he bade them get together on Mount Gerizim, which is by them (the Samaritans) looked upon as the most holy of all mountains, and assured them that he would show them those sacred vessels which were laid under that place, because Moses put them there." They were violently dispersed by Pilate. *Antiq.* xviii. ch. iv.

‡ The last verses of Malachi, iv. 5, 6, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," &c., were doubtless much commented on by the Jews; and in the state of the nation at that time it was natural enough to attribute the character of Elijah to John, from their resemblance to each other in occupation and mode of life. But the camel's hair and leathern girdle lead us to infer that John himself intended to imitate Elijah (see 2 Kings i. 8). A passage in Zechariah xiii. 4, seems to show that the imitation had been frequent.

appeared in the desert near Jordan, baptizing the people, and urging them to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.\* He accompanied this prediction with exhortations to virtue, according to the Essene school, representing that national reformation was the appointed precursor of the approaching change. He thus appears to have combined many of the Essene characteristics with a modification of the teaching of Judas, omitting its warlike tendency. The laudatory terms in which Josephus speaks of him as a teacher of virtue, furnish a strong presumption that John's discourses contained at least no apparent incentive to insurrection.†

The appearance, however, of an enthusiast, preaching in the desert their long-expected kingdom, produced much excitement throughout Judea.‡ Crowds came to hear him, and

\* Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3.

† "Now some of the Jews thought that God had suffered Herod's army to be destroyed as a just punishment on him for the death of John, called the Baptist. For Herod had killed him, who was a just man, and had called upon the Jews to be baptized, and to practise virtue, exercising both justice toward men, and piety toward God. For so would baptism be acceptable to God, if they made use of it, not for the expiation of their sins, but for the purity of the body, the mind being first purified by righteousness. And many coming to him (for they were wonderfully taken with his discourses), Herod was seized with apprehensions, lest by his authority they should be led into sedition against him; for they seemed capable of undertaking any thing by his direction. Herod therefore thought it better to take him off before any disturbance happened, than to run the risk of a change of affairs, and of repenting when it should be too late to remedy disorders. Being taken up on this suspicion of Herod, and being sent bound to the castle of Machærus, just mentioned, he was slain there."—*Antiq.* xviii. ch. 5.

‡ In later times, the preaching and sect of John the Baptist were lost sight of, owing to the pre-eminence of his successor. But that his sect was one of much notoriety near his own time, is seen from Acts xviii. and xix. ; for, twenty-three years after his death, Apollos and other Jews, who had not even heard of Jesus, were preaching the baptism of John. It is remarkable that the writer calls these Jews "certain disciples," which shows that John's preaching was considered to comprise the essential doctrine of the new sect, of which he was strictly the founder. This doctrine was the



to give the outward sign of inward purification, submission to baptism.\* Amongst these was a Galilean named Jesus, the son of Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth.

All classes of society must from time to time produce individuals of distinguished mental superiority. In ordinary times this may remain unseen and dormant; but when some prevalent enthusiasm is abroad, it is quickened into life and action, and breaks forth to public gaze in the form of a great character. Jesus, the peasant of Galilee, possessed one of those gifted minds which are able to make an impression on mankind, and the age in which he lived supplied the stimulus required for its manifestation. He partook of the enthusiasm common to many patriotic Jews of his time, viz. an expectation of the approaching miraculous exaltation of Israel; and the perception of his own mental elevation over those around him led him to indulge in the idea, not unnatural to any ardent Israelite, that he himself was to be the prophet and prince, like unto Moses, who should fill the restored throne of David. He had studied intensely the literature within the reach of the Jewish peasants, the Scriptures of the Old Testament,† with which his mind was the more thoroughly imbued, as its attention had not been diffused over a wider field of wri-

coming of the kingdom of Heaven. Aquila and Priscilla did not pretend to convert Apollos, who was already instructed in "the way of the Lord," but only to explain this way "more perfectly." Acts xviii. 24-26.

\* Moses ordered the people to wash their clothes previously to receiving the law. Exod. xix. 10. Aaron and his sons were washed at their consecration. Levit. viii. 6. Lightfoot (in Matt. iii. 6.) quotes Maimonides and many other Jewish authorities to show that baptism was considered a necessary introduction of proselytes to Judaism. Hence a new teacher might naturally adopt this rite as the sign of initiation or adherence to his doctrine. "Partaking of the waters of purification" was an initiatory rite with the Essenes. *War*, ii. 8, 6.

† The Apocrypha is not an important addition; and the other Jewish writings were chiefly comments upon the Scriptures.

tings. But a bold and active mind cannot be entirely fettered, even by the authorities which it acknowledges; these may give to it a direction, but its native energy will find a vent in original thought and speculation. The inconsistency between the admission of a divine authority and the exercise of reason, is overlooked; or if attended to, an excuse for the latter is easily found in the right of each mind to explain and interpret at least in its own way. So Jesus, although from early associations, patriotism, and conviction, a sincere believer in the divine authority of Moses and the prophets,\* drew his chief materials of thought from his own observation of men and things; commented freely† upon the Scriptures, which it never occurred to him to controvert; scrupled not to give to them his own sense;‡ and delivered his own sayings with force and sufficiency.§ Whilst admitting to himself only the office of fulfilling the law and the prophets, he, in reality, made these the stock on which he grafted his own thoughts and sentiments. In like manner, although his station and place of abode made him peculiarly conversant with the doctrines of the Essenes and Galileans, he was not a mere follower of either party, but adopted and re-invigorated with his sanction, so much of the sentiments of either as accorded with his own taste and judgment. He retained the pure morality of the Essenes, but neglected their rigid austerities.

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\* Matt. xxiii. 2.

† Matt. xix. 8, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so, and I say unto you . . .

‡ Matt. xxii. 40, On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

§ Matt. v. 21, 22, Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you, &c. The greater part of the moral precepts of Jesus may be traced in the Old Testament and the Apocrypha; but the mode of introducing them, and the addition of some new views, are enough to establish his title to originality.

He adopted the religious liberalism of Judas, but he abstained from the evidently useless proceeding of declared insurrection.

A mind conscious of its own power, and whose energy is increased by a tincture of enthusiasm, must make itself felt in some manner. It was impossible for Jesus to remain his whole life a carpenter at Nazareth; but all ordinary ways to greatness were then closed to the lower ranks in Judea, except that of heading a revolt. The priesthood was confined to the family of Aaron; the prejudices of Jerusalem must exclude a Galilean peasant from the Sanhedrim;\* and other subsidiary dignities could only be reached by subservience to the Romans or to the tetrarchs. The necessity of action in a sphere congenial to the ruling tendencies of the mind, is, with some persons, a more powerful motive than a cool calculation of consequences; and Jesus determined to imitate Moses, and fulfil the prophets, by assuming the character of the Messiah, or the Prophet-king of Israel.

The preaching of John roused him from the obscurity in which he had remained till about the 30th year of his age; and immediately after his baptism by his predecessor, he began himself, with far greater resources, to preach on the same favourite topic, the approach of the Kingdom of heaven,† endeavouring chiefly in the first place, to introduce that general Repentance, and return to righteousness, which by many devout Jews were believed to be the first and most indispensable requisites for attaining the Kingdom. His discourses, like those of John, were filled up with exhortations to morality, agreeing mostly with those of the older Jewish

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\* Strictly speaking, the Sanhedrim was open to all the Israelites. Maimon. in Sanhed. cap. 2. But the priests and Levites appear to have formed the greater part.

† Matt. iv. 17, From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

writings and of the Essenes, and with vigorous reproofs of the prevailing corruptions of the age. Public preaching on such topics, accompanied by inexhaustible illustrations from nature and familiar objects,\* could hardly fail in any country of drawing crowds of listeners.

In nations little acquainted with physical science, mental superiority is often supposed to be connected with some degree of command over the inanimate world; and the multitudes who heard Jesus imagined that nature, as well as they, must recognize his authority. Nor was it unnatural, in the state of science at that time, that Jesus himself should share the notion.† Accordingly, when urged by the crowds to heal their maladies, he yielded to their importunities,‡ so far as to speak the word which they wanted.§ In many such cases, the confident expectation of its efficiency was enough to produce an apparent success, and it appears that Jesus was in general cautious of committing himself to the trial, unless there was this confidence in the party apply-

\* Matt. xiii. 34, All these things spake Jesus to the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them.

† The learned Josephus even often intimates that he himself possessed certain supernatural gifts by virtue of his priestly dissent. *War*, book iii. c. viii. 3, 9.

‡ And they *brought* unto him all sick people, &c.; ix. 27, And two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us; xv. 23, And a woman of Canaan cried unto him, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. . . In this gospel, it seldom appears that Jesus sought an opportunity of doing a miracle, but rather that the attempt was forced upon him.

§ The addition, "and he healed them all," or its equivalent, occurs so regularly at the close of all Matthew's narratives of this sort, that it looks more like a sentence adopted to finish the story well, than the evidence to a matter of fact. For, in general, this, the most important part of the story, is passed over without giving particulars. See, in addition to the above, Matt. viii. 13-16; xiv. 14; xv. 30; xx. 34. The question concerning Matthew's veracity will be considered in chap. iii.



ing.\* But when he found the attempt succeed, he would begin to entertain more seriously the idea that he possessed the supernatural power attributed to him, and might easily conclude, that, by relying on it, and boldly exercising it, any miracle was possible.† Perceiving that in such cases diffidence usually preceded a failure, he might naturally infer that a sufficient degree of confidence only was wanting to produce the most wonderful effect.

The prevalent opinion of his country was that diseases were occasioned by the entrance of demons into the human body, and the power of expelling them by certain words of command was believed in by the most enlightened Jews.‡ The

\* Matt. ix. 2, And Jesus, seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy . . . ix. 27, Believe ye that I am able to do this? . . . Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.

† Matt. xvii. 19, 20, Then said the disciples, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you.

‡ Josephus has the following passages concerning demons :—" Yet after all this pains in getting, it (the root Baaras) is only valuable on account of one virtue it hath, that if it be only brought to sick persons, it quickly drives away those called demons, which are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men that are alive, and kill them, unless they can obtain some help against them."—*War*, vii. ch. vi. 3.

" God enabled him (Solomon) to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force unto this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, named Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian and his sons, and his captives, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this :—He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he abjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantation which he had composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such

miracle was one of the most ambiguous kind, since any change of symptoms might be regarded as proof of the demon's exit. In cases of lunacy, an authoritative word or gesture might produce a momentary calm; and in fits, exhaustion must soon bring on the same state. In many other diseases, palsy, fever, &c., a sudden energetic effort on the part of the patient might produce the appearance of recovery. Instances of success, which were alone likely to be recorded, (although we have some indications of occasional failure,)\* would be improved in passing from mouth to mouth, and by zealous partizans the account would soon be embellished with a few tales of more decided miracles, such as curing the blind and raising the dead; especially if such tales had some foundation in fact, so far as that the attempt, or the application only, had been really made.†

Jesus having thus acquired the reputation of a miracle-worker, as well as of a prophet, was followed in his progress through the towns of Galilee by multitudes of the populace,

a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were shown very manifestly."—*Antiq.* viii. 2-5.

\* Compare Matt. x. 1, "And he gave them power to cast out unclean spirits," with xviii. 16, "And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." See also Mark vi. 5, "And he could there do no mighty work (οὐκ ἔδυνάτο), save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief." The translation of the Improved Version is "would not," but the usual sense of *δυναται* is "to be able." Besides, it is plain that want of will was not the cause of the ill success of Jesus, since he did make some attempts, and also because the word "marvelled" implies some disappointment.

This passage shows very clearly that belief was considered as an essential preparation for a miracle; and therefore when the miracle did not take place, it was natural enough for the disciples to attribute the failure to the want of belief.

† The miracles attributed to Jesus will be examined more closely in chap. viii.

and even by some of the better sort of the Jews,\* who cherished in secret the hope of their country's revival, and began to look upon the new prophet of Nazareth, as more than a common pretender. Jesus then proceeded to lay the foundation for a separate organized society by selecting twelve of his countrymen to be his more immediate supporters, promising them that when he should obtain his kingdom, they should rule under him over the twelve tribes of Israel. These he sent forth to the neighbouring towns to preach,† like John and himself, the preparation for the approaching miraculous regeneration of Israel, or the Kingdom of Heaven.‡

Jesus at first assumed only the title of Son of Man,§ which had been given to some of the prophets. The more dangerous claim of the character of Messiah, or successor of

\* That some of the disciples, besides Matthew, had been in tolerable worldly circumstances, may be conjectured from Matt. xix. 29.

† Matt. x. 7, And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

‡ That Jesus at first, like the rest of his countrymen, considered the kingdom of heaven to mean primarily the exaltation of his nation, appears from the following texts: Matt. v. 35, Swear not, neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king; x. 5, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; xv. 24, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; xix. 28, When the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; xxiii. 37, O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not.—Besides, the natural and common signification of the word Christ, or Anointed, was equivalent to king. See 1 Samuel xxiv. 6.

But in maintaining that Jesus aimed at the dominion over Israel, it is not pretended that his views were all along limited to this. The coming of the kingdom, in the last verse of Malachi, and in Isaiah, is made coincident with the spread of righteousness over the earth. Jesus, having derived his views in great part from the prophets, intended to be both king and prophet; and therefore spoke both as a national regenerator and a moral reformer.

§ The chief reason for Jesus's assuming this title will be considered in the examination of Daniel, chap. xiv.

David, he only acknowledged in secret to his more confidential followers; \* for its open avowal was nearly equivalent to a declaration of revolt from the Romans, and an armed insurrection does not seem to have been his immediate aim. He contented himself with the exercise of his prophetic office amongst the people, and with spreading the expectation of the divine deliverance promised by the prophets. This conduct might appear to the ruling authorities suspicious, but was not immediate sedition; and their patience or indifference lasted till few synagogues or villages of Galilee remained which had not heard the voice of the new prophet or of his followers.

To understand the conduct of Jesus, we must allow that it was, like that of all other men, influenced, in some degree, by circumstances. If, at this critical time, his preaching throughout Galilee had been followed by a general rising of the Jewish nation, the expulsion of the Romans, and the election of himself to the throne, his acts and expressions up to this time lead us to conjecture that, although his superior prophetic dignity set him above the subordinate details of organizing and heading revolts in person, he might yet have accepted such success as a sign from heaven, and allowed himself to be borne on to the seat of David, in the generally understood character of the Messiah, a triumphant king of Israel. But events happened otherwise; and from them the views of Jesus necessarily took a somewhat different colour. †

His proceedings attracted the attention of the Jewish rulers. ‡ Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, had already imprisoned

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\* Matt. xvi. 13-20.

† The character and views of Jesus will be considered more fully in ch. xvi.

‡ Matt. xiv. 1.



John, from jealousy of his influence with the people, and, according to Josephus, put him to death from the same motive. Jesus appeared to be a still more dangerous person, and it became known that Herod was seeking to arrest him.

Jesus at first avoided the danger by retiring into desert places.\* His situation was now become difficult and perplexing. Although followed by crowds of wonder-gazers, who, he knew, were able to confer only the name and the danger of royalty, none of the influential towns † had given him any support or countenance, and no signs from heaven yet appeared to indicate superhuman aid. His progress hitherto seemed brilliant; but it could not long be continued. To perambulate the towns of Galilee, preaching to hungry multitudes, must become a burden to both parties as soon as the excitement of novelty was lost. And now the local government was about to interfere.

There were two courses open to Jesus; to endeavour to make his peace with the tetrarch, by withdrawing from the public eye and sinking back to his original station, or to sustain his claims and perish a martyr; for it was obvious that the danger must be greater at Jerusalem, or the parts adjoining, than in Galilee.

The magnanimity which leads public men to fear death less than a disgraceful retreat is not uncommon. The energy of his character, the raised expectations of his followers, and probably a secret persuasion that he was still the agent destined to accomplish the purpose of the God of Israel, led Je-

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\* Matt. xiv. 13.

† Matt. xi. 21-23, "Wo unto thee Chorazin... Bethsaida... and thou, Capernaum." It will be seen that this sketch follows chiefly the order of Matthew, but not exactly. For reasons to be given hereafter, it appears that this gospel is the best guide in this respect, but still that it has not preserved the true order of all the events and discourses.

sus to prefer the former. He determined to go up at once to Jerusalem, and to claim openly the Messiahship.\* This was rushing upon nearly certain death. Enthusiasm cannot blind men to the most obvious consequences of their actions, and Jesus had already experienced that his imagined character of Messiah did not secure him from human wants and dangers.† He began to contemplate the probability of his martyrdom, and to give some intimations to his followers that the Messiah must suffer before he should reign.‡

He proceeded then towards Jerusalem, accompanied by the most ardent of his followers, and by the women of rank who supplied the temporal wants of the society. After visiting some intermediate towns, he made his entry boldly into the metropolis, riding upon an ass's colt, in order to apply to himself a passage of Zechariah supposed to relate to the Messiah.§ The populace crowded about the prophet of Na-

\* Matt. xvi. 21, "From that time forth, began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."—The reasons for admitting only a part of this account are given in chap. xv.

† Matt. viii. 20.

‡ To ascertain precisely the time at which Jesus began to teach the doctrine of a suffering Messiah is one of the most difficult points in this inquiry. For all the evangelists are more or less careless of the order of time in relating the discourses of Jesus, and the subsequent conduct of the disciples seems to show that he did not plainly predict his death so soon. Yet it was natural enough, on taking such a dangerous step as the journey to Jerusalem, that he should prepare himself for the worst, and that he should begin to mould his doctrine according to his internal apprehensions. But it was not done in Galilee so clearly as to prevent the disciples' expectation of a temporal kingdom, which continued till nearly his death. See chap. xv.

§ Zech. ix. 9. The rest of the book shows tolerably clearly that Zechariah intended this passage for his patron Zerubbabel. But, like many other passages descriptive of a king of Israel, and rendered obscure by the want of a more minute history, it was likely to be considered a prophecy of the Messiah, when quoted separately.

In a tract of the Talmud, Sanhedrin, fol. 98, 1, this text of Zechariah is

zareth, and were easily induced by the disciples to join in proclaiming him son of David, and Messiah. Encouraged by their enthusiasm, and supported for a brief space by their physical strength, he proceeded to signalize Zion's reception of her king by a more open and practical demonstration of his claims than any that he had yet ventured upon. He not only accepted the dangerous homage of the multitude, but endeavoured to excite more general attention by proceeding, in his character of regenerator, to expel by main force the traffickers from the temple.

But the cautious vigilance of the priests and Pharisees soon checked the momentary popular enthusiasm. The city in general pursued its occupations, the Roman garrison remained in full strength,\* and the faith which had been able to expel demons, and which it was hoped might be able, when fully relied on, to cast mountains into the sea, was now found insufficient to triumph over the formidable realities with which Jesus and his followers had come into contact. The last resource had failed; the King had entered, yet Zion for the most part remained unmoved. Jesus perceived that even the partial support which he had received, brought him in reality nearer to the cross than to the throne of Israel, since a disorderly mob was no protection against the Roman government, and without a legion of angels he had little chance of resisting the legions of Pilate. He now saw that not only was there no chance of a national effort at regeneration, but

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considered as relating to the Messiah, and is reconciled with Dan. vii. 13, thus; "If the Israelites conducted themselves well, the Messiah would come on the clouds of Heaven; if they showed themselves unworthy, he would come in a lowly form, and sitting on an ass." There is reason to believe that the Talmud, although compiled after the time of Christ, preserves the traditions existing before his time. In this case, it is in the highest degree improbable that its Jewish compilers should have borrowed from the Christian records.

\* Roman garrison in Jerusalem mentioned *War*, ii. 13, 5.

that it was not the will of God for the present to grant aid from heaven. At the outset of his career, he might have flattered himself that he was destined to be a second Moses, and to redeem Israel by mighty signs and wonders; but his progress hitherto had convinced him that this was not in the divine plans, and the Essene doctrines of implicit submission to the decrees of Providence, and of the immortality of the soul, led him to look calmly on the growing probability of his own approaching death. It was only left for him to maintain, as long as events allowed, the character of prophet and king, which he had so long borne amongst his followers, and to meet his fate with a dignity becoming his pretensions.

Jesus having thus prepared his mind for the worst, met the remonstrances of the Pharisees with covert defiance, and continued to preach unreservedly to the people. His audacity for a time insured his safety; for the people, admiring his boldness, and delighted with his discourses, which rebuked keenly the vices of their superiors, became his protectors; insomuch that it was seen that any open attempt to destroy him must produce a tumult. The Jewish priests and nobles were perplexed. In the existing state of the public mind, the most trifling tumult might become the occasion of an insurrection; they were in an embarrassing position with respect to the Romans, who had left them hitherto many privileges, but who might make use of any appearance of revolt to reduce them to more rigid subjection. Placed between imperious masters and an impatient populace, and having themselves still much to lose, their constant policy was to preserve the *status quo*, and to stifle at once, as quietly as possible, all tendency to sedition.\* They would have will-

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\* See the account of Agrippa's attempt to stifle a tumult (Jos., *War*, book ii. xvi.); and the commendations given to the high priest Ananus on the same account, *War*, iv. v.



ingly denounced Jesus at once to the Roman governor, who alone possessed the power of life and death; but he had not yet committed any sufficiently clear act of treason, and would not be led by their agents into a declaration against the tribute. They were constrained, then, to see him for a time continuing in the temple the preaching which had excited the multitudes in Galilee. He took up his residence at a disciple's house in Bethany, whence he could conveniently visit Jerusalem, and, by the attractiveness of his character and discourses, gained many adherents. A few even of the nobles, who partook of the popular feeling, and themselves waited for the kingdom of God, secretly befriended him. Amongst these were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. But the greater part of the leading men perceived that a reformer who not only avowed his claim to the throne of David, but who inveighed unsparingly against themselves, must at any risk be removed. In addition to the danger of compromising them with the Romans, he was leading the people to despise their own authority. They decided upon seizing his person at some moment when he could be found apart from the people, and then delivering him to the governor as a mover of sedition.

One of the disciples of Jesus was known to the high priest.\* By his means, or through his concealed friends, Joseph and Nicodemus, Jesus had notice of the intention to apprehend him; but he had been long prepared to prefer martyrdom to flight. He assembled his disciples to eat the passover supper with him, and took a formal leave of them, telling them now plainly that, in order to fulfil the prophets,† the Messiah

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\* John viii. 15. The writer of this gospel relates the purport of several secret consultations of the Pharisees and priests. John ix. 47; xii. 19.

† Matt. xxvi. 24, 31, 54, 56.

must be cut off, and undergo death as preparatory to the reception of his kingdom.\* The garden of Gethsemane might witness some mournful strugglings of nature as the last dreadful reality seemed to approach, when the Messiah must lose all remnants of his imaginary dignity, and in the sight of his companions be presented to Jerusalem as a crucified malefactor instead of a triumphant King. But the disgraceful evasions which, in this extremity, might have been the resource of a mere disappointed impostor, were impossible to Jesus. The same earnest faith in the God of Israel which had led him to contemplate projects, in ordinary calculation the wildest visions, could endow him with fortitude equal at least to that of the many well-known examples in his country's scriptures and legends. To brave the anger of the Sanhedrim and of Pilate was a resolution not extraordinary in a generous mind, brought up from infancy to admire the youths who had persisted in serving God in defiance of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Antiochus.†

The gradual change in the views of Jesus since his departure from Galilee had not been readily adopted by his disciples. Excepting Judas Iscariot, whose attachment was not strong enough to bind him to the indications of his master's

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\* Luke xxii. 16, 18, 28, 29.

† The ardour of the Jews to die for their religion and country, probably much surpassed the similar spirit amongst the Greeks and Romans. The examples are innumerable from the times of the Maccabees. In the reign of Herod the Great, Judas and Matthias, teachers of the law, thus exhort the young men to pull down a golden eagle erected by the king contrary to the law: "the virtue of the action would appear much more advantageous to them than the pleasures of life; they would die for the preservation of the law of their fathers; they would acquire an everlasting fame and commendation; the common calamity of dying cannot be avoided by our living so as to escape any such dangers, but death is alleviated when attained by actions which bring praise and honour."—*Ant.* xvii. 6. 2. In other places, the immortality of the soul is not omitted. See *War*, vii. 8, 7.

approaching fate, and Peter, James, and John, who might already have begun, like Jesus, to transfer their hopes to a kingdom to be revealed hereafter from heaven ; the disciples in general retained their first expectations, and trusted, in spite of all adverse appearances, that Jesus was he which should redeem Israel. The doctrine of a suffering Messiah was to them all too surprising to allow of their minds being accommodated to it on so short a notice ; and when the capture of Jesus was soon afterwards effected, the whole of the disciples, after some feeble attempts at resistance, forsook him and fled.

The constancy with which men sustain their pretensions under persecution, insult, and the fear of death, is generally regarded as a strong, although not infallible, proof of their sincerity. The highest degree of evidence of this kind is afforded by the conduct of Jesus during his trial. It shows that, if he had deluded others by his assumption of the Messiahship, and the promise of his approaching kingdom, he himself fully shared in the delusion. Before the tribunals of his judges, he abated nothing of the claims which he had announced in secret to his disciples. To the high priest he asserted that he was the Christ, and the Son of Man, who would be seen hereafter coming on the clouds of heaven.\* To the Roman governor he also admitted at once that he was the King of the Jews.† The quiet confidence with which

\* Matt. xxvi. 64.

† Luke xxiii. 2, " And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ a king. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews ? and he answered him, and said, Thou sayest." From Luke xxii. 70, 71, it appears that this was a form of assent. This is confirmed by several Rabbinical passages.

Matt. xxvii. 11, " And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews ? and Jesus said unto

he maintained pretensions apparently so extravagant, when a renunciation of them might possibly have saved his life; the firm self-possession with which he declined to answer the accusations brought against him, thereby neglecting the opportunity, to which few men in such circumstances show themselves indifferent, of making a favourable impression on the bystanders, by clearing away misrepresentations, extenuating or explaining the most obnoxious parts of their conduct, and finally appealing to their pity or admiration;—these points in the conduct of Jesus seem to betoken a high-minded and sincere enthusiasm, free from any consciousness of imposture. He behaved like a prophet, Messiah, and Son of God, because he believed himself to be such.

Pilate did not consider the mere assumption of the title Christ as a capital crime, since it appeared to be unaccompanied by any clear proof\* of treason, and was willing to spare the life of Jesus. But he suffered himself to be overruled by the priests. He had some respect for the native leaders of Judea, and could not refuse to concede to them the death of one man. As a Roman soldier, his object was to preserve the country in subjection to the empire, and the administration of strict justice would appear to him a less certain and obvious method than a system of prompt executions.† The sacrifice of a Jew accused of sedition by his

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him, Thou sayest." After this, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus answered no further questions. John alone inserts a further conversation, in which Jesus says that his kingdom is not of this world. But some reasons will be given in chap. vi. for considering the dialogues in this last gospel chiefly as a convenient form adopted by the writer for delivering the doctrines of his own time.

\* Matt. xxvii. 23, Why, what evil hath he done?

† The account of Pilate in Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 3 & 4, gives rather the impression of a harsh soldier than of a wanton tyrant like Florus. The acts related are chiefly instances of blundering severity in support of the Roman authority.



own countrymen, could at least do no harm. He gave sentence, then, that it should be as they required; and Jesus, after being scourged, was crucified by the soldiers. He seemed to expire in the unusually short time of about six hours;\* he remained suspended till the evening,† which might be three or four hours longer; and before he was taken down from the cross, one of the soldiers, in order to ascertain, or to ensure his death, pierced his side with a spear.‡

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\* According to Mark, who is the most exact in noting the time, Jesus was crucified at the third hour, the darkness began at the sixth hour, and he expired at the ninth hour. (xv. 25, 33, 34.) Matthew and Luke appear to mean also, that the darkness, not the crucifixion, began at the sixth hour. But John says it was about the sixth hour when Pilate said, Behold your king, previously to the crucifixion. Since the other three agree very well, it is most reasonable to attribute the mistake to the last gospel.

† The body had not been taken down when Joseph applied to Pilate. Mark xv. 46. This was when the even was come. Matt. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 42. The sun set at Jerusalem in the beginning of April soon after six. Their third hour corresponded to our nine o'clock. Therefore Jesus was suspended nine hours, and possibly some short time longer.

‡ Notwithstanding the surprise of Pilate that Jesus should be so soon dead, (Mark xv. 44,) I cannot find sufficient reason to disbelieve the reality of his death before he was taken from the cross; for, firstly, The injuries undergone by Jesus, viz. the scourging and other ill-treatment from the soldiers before crucifixion, the loss of blood by the piercing of the hands and feet, and the unnatural distortion of the limbs during six hours, might be sufficient to cause death to a man unless very robust. Secondly, The Roman soldiers were well accustomed to their business, and were not likely to pass by Jesus at the breaking of the legs, unless they were satisfied of his death. Thirdly, The piercing of his side was an additional security. Fourthly, Pilate's attention was drawn to the matter, and he therefore must have obtained what he considered satisfactory evidence of the death from the centurion, before he granted the body to Joseph. Fifthly, In the subsequent controversies between the disciples of Jesus and the Jews, the latter never pretended that Jesus had not really died on the cross, but answered the story of the resurrection in a manner which admitted it.

Victorinus, who was crucified under Nerva, with his head downwards, lived three days. The martyrs Timotheus and Maura lived nine days. Eusebius says that some who were crucified in Egypt died only of hunger; yet St. Andrew, who was fastened with cords instead of nails, in order that his death might be slower, died in two days; which would lead us to sup-

Joseph of Arimathea, using the liberty which the Jewish custom\* allowed to the family (including probably the friends) of the deceased, demanded the body from Pilate; in concert with Nicodemus, he embalmed it in the Jewish manner, by wrapping it in linen and spices, and buried it the same evening in a tomb, said by Matthew to be his own, and described by John as near at hand, and situated in a garden.

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Schoettgen, *Horæ Heb.* i. 9, gives an account of all that can be found in the Talmud concerning Jesus. The following is an abridgment of what he has collected :—

Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1. "He whom we call the son of Satda, is the son of Pandira. His mother was Mary, the plaiter of women's hair." It is questioned whether Satda was the name of Mary or of her husband. Massecheth Kallah, fol. 18. 2. The story of Mary's infidelity to her lawful husband is related in a different way, but with many absurdities, one of which is that R. Akiba is made her cotemporary. Sanhedrin, fol. 107, 2. "When king Jannæus slew the Rabbins, (Alex. Jannæus reigned 105—79 before our Christian æra,) R. Josua ben Perachia, and Jesus went to Alexandria in Egypt." Then follows an excommunication of Jesus by the Rabbi, after which it is said that Jesus exercised magic, and led

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pose that death in one day or less, with the usual method, might often occur. *Lipsius de Cruce*, l. 2. cap. viii. & ix.

Josephus (*Vitâ*, 75) relates that he obtained leave from Titus to take down three of his friends who had been crucified, and were still alive; that the utmost care was taken of them, but that one only recovered. He does not say how long they had been suspended.

This subject will be considered further in the Appendix.

\* The Romans were accustomed to leave the bodies of criminals upon the cross until they were consumed away, or were devoured by birds of prey. The Jewish law (*Deut.* xxi. 23.) ordained that the body of "one hanged upon a tree should not remain all night upon the tree, but should in any wise be removed that day." The Romans usually abstained from infringing Jewish customs; but as a special request was deemed necessary to obtain the removal of the bodies of Jesus and the two crucified with him, (*John* xix. 31.) it would seem doubtful if this Jewish law was invariably observed in the case of crucifixions by Roman authority. With respect to the burial of criminals, the Sanhedrim were accustomed to inter those executed by their order in tombs set apart for the purpose, and with certain circumstances of ignominy; but if the relations of the person executed demanded the body, it was granted to them. *Babyl. Sanhedrin*, fol. 46, 2, quoted by Lightfoot in *Matt.* xxvii. 58.

the Israelites into the worst sins. The same things repeated, *Sotah*, fol. 47, 1. The chronology being evidently erroneous, *R. Gedaliah in Shalsheth hakkabala*, fol. 17, 1, says that another *R. Josua*, who lived seventy years before the temple was destroyed, was the preceptor of Jesus. *Schabbath*, fol. 104, 2. There is a tradition that *R. Eliezer* said to the learned men, "Did not the son of *Satda* bring magic from Egypt, by a cutting made in his flesh?" They replied "*Stultus fuit; ab homine stulto vere probationem nullam petere solemus.*" *Raschius* explains that the Egyptians prohibited their magical books from being carried out of their country, and that Jesus abstracted a schedule in an incision in his thigh. *Sanhedrin*, fol. 67, 1. The method of stoning those who seduced the people is related. "Thus they did to the son of *Satda* in *Lud*, (*Lydda*) and suspended him on the evening of the *Passover*." *Sanhedrin*, fol. 43, 1. A tradition; "on the evening of the *Passover* they suspended Jesus. And a crier went before him for forty days, saying; He goeth forth to be stoned, because he hath used divinations, and deceived, and seduced Israel to apostacy. Whosoever can testify to his innocence, let him come forth and testify. But they found no one to testify, and they suspended him on the evening of the *Passover*." *Gittin*, fol. 57, 1. A story is told of the punishment after death of a certain Jesus, who however is said afterwards to be not the God of the Christians, but another, who derided the words of the sages: "For behold, it is not written *Jesus Nazaræus*, but *Jesus Gereda*. Moreover, yours is not to be understood, because he did not commit this only, but seduced Israel, and made himself God, and overthrew the whole foundation of piety. Therefore he must needs be wholly diverse from him, who admitted the written law, but rejected the oral one only, and who ought to be called not otherwise than a heretic." *Sanhedrin*, fol. 43, 1. "Our Rabbins deliver that Jesus had five disciples; *Matthai*, *Nakai*, *Nezer*, *Boni*, and *Thoda* (*Thaddæus*?)." A story of their execution is related, each endeavouring to save himself by a Scripture quotation. *Avoda Sara*, fol. 17, 1. "*R. Eliezer* said, I was once walking in the upper market-place of *Zippore*, and found there one of the disciples of Jesus the Nazarene, whose name was *James Sechaniensis* (of *Shechem*?)." Then follows a discussion on a point of the law. *Avoda Sara*, fol. 40, 4, and *Schabbath*, fol. 14, 4. A story of the cure of *R. Eleazar ben Dama* of a serpent's bite by the word of *Jacobus of Sama*, in the name of Jesus son of *Pandira*: which cure is condemned as unlawful by *R. Ismael*, and *Eleazar* dies. A similar story is told of the nephew of *R. Josua ben Levi*, who suffered from a stoppage in the throat; and "a certain man came to him, who whispered in the name of Jesus, son of *Pandira*, and he was immediately healed. But *R. Josua* pronounced that it would have been better for him to die; and this happened."

The value of all this is little more than to show that the Talmud cannot help us much as to the history of Jesus. In fact, the Jews of the schools of Palestine after the fall of Jerusalem, are miserable sources of history of any kind. Their allusions to their own affairs and to the recent war are mixed with absurd legends. Besides *Josephus* and *Philo*, there is no Jewish historical authority of value during the first two centuries. Notwithstanding the satisfactory testimonies brought by *Josephus* to the superior exactness of his own work, (*Life*, § 66), we must lament the loss of that of his rival *Justus of Tiberias*, who wrote the Jewish history from Moses to the death of the younger *Agrippa*. But *Photius* (33rd code of *Bibliotheca*) tells us that he had read the book of *Justus*, and that it contained no mention of the appearance of Christ, and passed over slightly the affairs most necessary to be insisted upon (doubtless those relating to the Christians).

King Agrippa, after applauding highly the works of Josephus, adds, "How-  
ever when thou comest to me, I will inform thee of a great many things which  
thou dost not know." It is probable that these things related more to the secrets  
of his own and the Roman court, than to the affairs of Paul and the Christians.  
Yet how the hint awakens our wish for the king's account of the Apostle's  
trial!



## CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED, FROM THE DEATH OF  
JESUS TO THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

THE disciples of Jesus had not thought it possible that the Messiah could be allowed to perish ignominiously, but rather hoped that each successive disappointment was in reality bringing him nearer to his throne. The unexpected catastrophe bewildered them ; and for a short time their allegiance was shaken by alarm and uncertainty. They feared to appear in public as his friends ; the women, who incurred less danger, alone went to see where he was laid, and after the Sabbath, were the first to visit the tomb.

But this interval of one day and two nights, following upon the first hasty interment of Jesus, had given time to Joseph to take what further measures seemed expedient to him. His performance of the office of a friend in securing an honourable burial to Jesus, might excite suspicions on the part of the governor or of the council, and at the same time lead the disciples to regard him as their protector and leader. These characters he was not at all anxious to assume. He might have listened with interest to the discourses of Jesus, but his secret discipleship was not of that kind that he could leave all to follow him. He feared that the followers of Jesus, who had come up with him from the turbulent province of Galilee, although terrified for a moment, might attempt to excite the populace of Jerusalem to avenge him ; an attempt the more dangerous at that time, as Jerusalem was crowded with country people come up for the pass-

over.\* The place of interment was likely to be resorted to, and being in his own possession or under his superintendence, any disturbances which might arise from the access to, or attempts to recover, the remains of Jesus, were likely to be laid to his charge, and possibly he might be the next victim.†

He had the body removed from the tomb, or from that part of it where the women had seen it laid, and directed the agent who remained in charge of the open sepulchre to inform the visitants that Jesus was not there, but that they should behold him in Galilee.‡ The message was first delivered to Mary Magdalene and her companions, by whom and the subsequent narrators, in an interval of time of which

\* There were so many tumults raised on these occasions, that the approach of feasts was always regarded with apprehension by the priests. *Jos. Ant.* xvii. 9, 2; x. 2. *War*, ii. 3, 1.

† These are some of the considerations on which this conjectural filling up of the conduct of Joseph rests:—

Firstly, Joseph stood in peril.

Secondly, He was not of a temper to encounter martyrdom.

Thirdly, On the other hand, he was attached to Jesus and his disciples, and would be unwilling to cast them off harshly.

Fourthly, The expedient in question would seem to meet all these three difficulties.

Fifthly, The character of the disciples, for the most part simple country people, and believers in miracles, admitted of its being practised upon them.

Sixthly, Joseph had better means than any of the disciples of knowing what became of the body of Jesus. The total absence, therefore, of his important testimony, on either side of the question, confirms the suspicion that he had some peculiar motives for silence.

Seventhly, The conduct and writings of the disciples show that most of them were sincere believers in the resurrection and approaching re-appearance of their master.

The probabilities respecting the disposal of the remains of Jesus will be considered more amply in the chapter on the resurrection.

‡ Mark xvi. 5—7, “And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and

we cannot fix the precise limits, the occurrence was converted into the appearance of an angel, of two angels, and finally of Jesus himself.

The disciples at first treated the accounts of the women as idle tales; but could not remain unconvinced that the body had really disappeared. Thus Jesus seemed to meet with the same distinction as Moses, of whose sepulchre no man knew. The absence of the lifeless remains allowed full scope for the imagination.\* The Messiah might expect to be favoured with proofs of the Divine approbation similar to those which had been granted to the eminent servants of God of old, Enoch, Moses, and Elias. He had been raised from the dead, some bright cloud had served, like the fiery car of Elias, to convey him into heaven, whence they might expect to see

Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

This agrees nearly with the accounts of Matthew and Luke, except that Luke mentions two men at the tomb, and Matthew adds an earthquake. John says that Mary Magdalene saw the stone taken away when she first came, and, on coming a second time, saw the two men or angels. The concurrent testimony of the first three, not essentially contradicted by John, is thus in favour of the fact, that the women who visited the tomb were told by some one there that Jesus was risen, and gone into Galilee. After this the four accounts diverge into numberless contradictions.

It seems very probable that Joseph should endeavour to convey an intimation to the disciples to return into Galilee. But all the accounts are evidently coloured from the subsequent ideas of the church, and the attributing this message to Joseph is perhaps the most hazardous part of the conjecture.

\* Luke xxiv. 12. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

John xx. 6—9. "Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, *and he saw and believed*. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."

him return when the proper time for revealing his kingdom should arrive. The mystery of the Messiah's sudden death appeared to be thus explained ; the error had been theirs to suppose that they knew the right time and season for rescuing Israel, which the Father had reserved in his own power. Passages of Scripture were remembered, of which the Messiah's resurrection seemed to afford a new and sublime fulfilment ;\* and every text capable in the remotest manner of affording this sense supplied additional and indisputable proof of the fact. It was natural also to suppose that, in his superhuman state, Jesus might, before ascending into heaven, make himself visible to his faithful followers. Accordingly, accounts of actual appearances of Jesus soon found their way into the narrations of the events attending his supposed resurrection ; imagination or mistake continually afforded fresh materials for stories of a kind so honourable to the relator, and to the head of the church ; and of these stories we have at this day such as were current from forty to sixty years after the death of Jesus.

The disciples probably without delay took refuge in Galilee,† bearing with them the incipient working of these ideas. The aim of Joseph and of the priests was attained so far, that political disturbances were prevented. But the life and teachings of the Nazarene prophet had left an impulse, which might be partially diverted from its first channel, but which could not be suppressed.

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\* See chap. xii. The Jews never expected that the Messiah was to rise from the dead. Roseum. Schol. in Esaïam xlii.

† Matthew's account of the return of the disciples into Galilee meets with some confirmation from the last chapter of John ; and is probable in itself. The provincials were always accustomed to return from Jerusalem, after the feast, and the alarm of the disciples would hasten their departure. There was time for such a journey between the Passover and the day of Pentecost, viz. seven weeks. The accounts of Mark, Luke, and John, of the proceedings after the crucifixion, are so imperfect as to leave room for such a journey.



Before long, another periodical feast gave the followers of Jesus the opportunity of re-assembling at Jerusalem. Of these the most confidential, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, were fishermen of Galilee, who had followed Jesus at first in the hope of sharing the twelve thrones over the tribes of Israel, and afterwards from habit and attachment. After their long-imagined exaltation into companions of the Messiah, they could not return contentedly to obscurity. Although dismayed at first by the fate of their expected king, their hopes easily revived on behalf of a cause for which they had forsaken all. The apparently mysterious circumstances attending the death of Jesus strengthened their belief in his Messiahship, and the expectation of his approaching kingdom returned as the belief of his future re-appearance gained ground. The leadership of their society seemed due to Peter, whom Jesus had distinguished as his chief supporter. To be raised to the command over former associates and equals is gratifying to men in almost any circumstances; therefore, independently of the motives arising from religious zeal and a sincere attachment to a common cause, it was natural that succeeding to John the Baptist and Jesus, and presiding over a company of their followers, although attended with some danger, should seem to Peter preferable to casting nets again upon the sea of Tiberias.

The attainment of the Messiah's kingdom by means of a national insurrection, if it ever had been contemplated by Jesus, had ceased to be so, at latest, after his arrival at Jerusalem; and now the expectation of his approaching miraculous re-appearance precluded, on the part of the disciples, any idea of a revolution similar to that attempted by their countryman Judas twenty-five years previously. They were not called upon to act, in order to attain the kingdom, but to wait. The company ceased to bear a resemblance to a band of

missionary revolutionists, and fell into the form of a small religious fraternity, having for their bond of union the same doctrine as that which had been preached by John the Baptist, and afterwards by Jesus, viz. the approach of the kingdom of heaven foretold by the prophets; as a preparation for which, it was necessary for men to repent of the prevailing wickedness of the age, and to adopt purity of life. To this they now added, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, that he had risen from the dead, that he would soon appear in his proper character of King of Israel,\* and introduce the kingdom.

The Essenes had set the example of societies living in voluntary union, having their property in common, and acting in a remarkable degree on the principles of benevolence and moral purity. Jesus had also recommended mutual attachment as the distinctive sign of his followers. Their society bore, therefore, a close resemblance to those of the other Essenes;† but it was free from the more rigid austerities of that sect, and animated by all the new views which Jesus had introduced.

There was much in such a society to attract the better sort

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\* Acts ii. 22—40. In this sermon Peter mentions Christ as him who was to sit on the throne of David. iii. 13—26. Here Peter insists that Jesus was he whom the prophets had foretold. All the Jews understood this to be a great king of Israel. iv. 10—12, 25—27; v. 29—32.

† It seems probable that most of the disciples were Essenes; because, Firstly, They were neither Pharisees nor Sadducees. Secondly, The Essenes were chiefly of the lower orders. Thirdly, The society formed by them, as described in the Acts, resembles closely those of the Essenes generally, as described by Josephus. Fourthly, The name Essene never occurs in the New Testament, whilst the Pharisees and Sadducees are frequently alluded to; which is singular, except on the supposition that the disciples were Essenes themselves, and have therefore noticed this third important sect under the names, brethren, disciples, elect, saints, &c.

Many members of the previously existing sects might have adopted the whole or part of the notions of Judas, without renouncing their own peculiarities.

of the Jews. In it were to be found in full force all the themes of interest peculiar to their nation, the acknowledgment of Moses, the law, and the prophets, refreshed by an application to present times and events, and by the addition of some new and stirring topics. Antiquity alone could not maintain the interest of the Mosaic worship amidst the growing wants of the age, and the followers of Jesus brought the necessary revival. In the system of Moses also there was this important omission, that nothing was said of the resurrection of the dead. This doctrine, which had grown up in different forms in almost every nation of the world, had spread rapidly among the Jews since their contact with the Chaldeans. At the time of Christ it was one of the chief questions of the day, and its opponents, the Sadducees, were a small minority. The asserted resurrection of Jesus strikingly confirmed the Pharisaic, which was also the popular, belief of a resurrection of the dead. Moreover, the favourite Jewish notion of the future greatness of their nation was not yet laid aside. Even the peaceable Jews, most averse to attempts at all resembling that of Judas, might feel their imagination and patriotic feelings attracted to the doctrine of a redemption of Israel to be fought for by argument, and attained by patience, faith, and reformation. Also, the system of having all property in common, and of living in a state of brotherhood, has many attractions. To all which was added the claim of miraculous powers of an unusual extent, supported continually by highly-coloured versions of ordinary occurrences, by pious fictions, and, in some fortunate instances, by apparently visible proofs.\*

The hundred and twenty persons, therefore, of whom Peter and the other apostles found themselves the leaders, were

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\* See remarks on the miracles in the Acts, ch. x.

soon joined by increasing numbers.\* The aspect of the society became less obnoxious to the Jewish rulers than in the lifetime of Jesus, because there was now amongst them no living claimant of the throne of David. The doctrine of a Messiah to come from heaven did not appear very dangerous to men of the world; and in other points the followers of Jesus appeared outwardly merely as a new and zealous branch of a religious sect, combining many peculiarities of the Essenes with a harmless version of Galilean views. Besides, the doctrine of the resurrection, which they made so prominent, was calculated to conciliate towards them the Pharisaic part of the community.† Consequently the priests, after some irresolute efforts to stop the Apostles' public preaching,‡ more calculated to stimulate than effectually check them, decided upon letting them alone. The society soon afterwards became respectable in a worldly sense, by the open accession of Barnabas and other men of wealth, and in a few years even of part of the priests.§

This state of calm and prosperity || lasted long enough for

\* By three thousand on the day of Pentecost, or about seven weeks after the death of Jesus (Acts ii. 41); and by five thousand soon after (Acts iv. 4). In this latter case, however, it is only said they believed on Peter's preaching, and not, as in the former, that they were baptized and added unto them.

† The Sadducees appear as their chief opponents in the Acts, iv. 1; v. 17. It is not probable however that the doctrine of the resurrection was the main cause of the rigour of the Sadducees (Acts iv. 2), because that doctrine had been taught to the people long before. But the Sadducees at that time held the priesthood; they were bound to maintain tranquillity, and might naturally fear at first a continuation of the supposed seditious designs of Jesus. Acts iv. 18; v. 28, "Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

‡ Acts iv. 21, So when they had further threatened them, they let them go; v. 38—40, And to him (Gamaliel) they agreed: and when they had called the Apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

§ Acts iv. 36; vi. 7.

|| Acts iv. 32—34, And the multitude of them that believed were of one



the infant church to become a numerous, compact, and well-organized society, appearing to outward observers chiefly as a modification of the Essene sect, but having within itself all the zeal and vitality which new-born notions usually impart. But after a time a question arose which ended in separating them from the rest of the Jews, and showing them to the world as a distinct body.

Jesus had himself observed the ritual laws of Moses, and had not authorized their disuse. But the spirit of his preceptive discourses was to make light of ceremonies in comparison with morality.\* Hence Moses and Jesus came to appear somewhat at variance; and as there are always found men to widen a difference, some of the new converts went so far as to preach that the law of Moses was entirely superseded by the new prophet of Nazareth.† This brought the society into dislike with the stricter part of the Jews; a zeal was re-kindled for the honour of Moses and the law; the fury of part of the populace was excited by the adherents of old customs against the supposed innovators; and Stephen, one of the most forward of the liberalizing converts, was stoned.

The decided hostility of the rigid Mosaic party procured to the new sect the reputation of indifference, at least, to the laws of Moses. The society thus became an object of persecution; but was, at the same time, forced into a position which more than compensated for the inconveniences re-

heart and one soul...neither was there any among them that lacked. vi. 1, And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

\* Matt. xxiii. 23.

† Stephen was accused of having said that "Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered." Although the writer calls the accusers false witnesses, Stephen does not at all contradict this in his defence. Acts vi. vii.

sulting from the occasional and local attacks of a bigoted party.

The belief in one universal invisible Deity, held by the Jews, was so sublime in comparison with the established creeds of the neighbouring nations, that when the Jews came to have frequent intercourse with them, numbers were inclined to embrace Judaism.\* It was the only well-defined system of monotheism then known, and from the time of Alexander had made much progress among the Greeks. The chief obstacle was circumcision,† and other inconvenient rites of the Mosaic code. In proportion, therefore, as the new sect became unpopular with the most orthodox of the Jews, it became acceptable to the Judaizing Gentiles.

The Essene sect, under its new or Christianized form, now counted in its numbers many Jewish priests and men of rank; the Pharisees looked upon it favourably;‡ and it had obtained a reputation for the practice of a purer morality, and for superior skill in the interpretation of the prophets.§ John the Baptist, Jesus, and their followers, had given to it great notoriety, and caused it to be regarded as the most stirring and active of the Jewish sects; whilst the peculiar

\* Ezra and Nehemiah *passim*. Josephus against Apion, book ii. sect. 40, "Nay, farther, the multitude of mankind itself have had a great inclination of a long time to follow our religious observances...and as God himself pervades all the world, so hath our law passed through all the world also."

† See the story of Izates, king of Adiabene, Jos. *Antiq.* xx. ii. 3.

‡ Acts xv. 5; xxiii. 9.

§ Josephus not only mentions this as one of the characteristics of the Essenes, but allows them pre-eminence in the gift of prophecy among themselves, and gives several stories in confirmation of it. *Antiq.* xvii. 13, 3; xv. 10, 5. "We have thought it proper to relate these facts to our readers, how strange soever they be, and to declare what hath happened among us, because many of these Essenes have, by their excellent virtue, been thought worthy of this knowledge of divine revelations."—*War*, i. 3, 5. This agrees with the stress laid upon the fulfilment of prophecy, and the pretensions to prophecy, in the New Testament.

heresy which had begun to grow up in its bosom was of a nature more likely to recommend than to inculcate it in the eyes of strangers. The philosophic or religious Gentiles, who were inclined towards speculative Judaism, were therefore naturally attracted to this sect in preference; and Cornelius, a centurion of Cesarea, sent to Peter a request to be instructed in its doctrines. [A. D. 41.] Peter went to him with some of the brethren; and the interview ended in the conversion of Cornelius and his household, who exhibited at its close some of the powers regarded by the church as tokens of the Holy Spirit, viz., extemporaneous praying and preaching. This appeared to Peter sufficient reason for not refusing so important a convert, and Cornelius was baptized as a disciple of Jesus. On their arrival at Jerusalem, Peter and his friends were called to account by the more orthodox or Mosaic part of the brethren for admitting Cornelius without circumcision; but this objection was silenced by the assertion, that the whole affair was conducted in obedience to divine inspiration, which was confirmed by the gift of the Holy Spirit to the new converts. This first Gentile conversion was soon followed by numerous others; and the question of the necessity of circumcision was kept up as a matter of dispute not only between the new sect and the other Jews, but amongst the members of that sect itself. Peter and the other leading disciples had at first entertained no idea of extending their society beyond their own nation,\* to which the original idea of the kingdom of heaven did seem chiefly to apply; but as Galileans, their attachment to the ritual law of Moses was less firm than that of the Jews of Jerusalem; and perceiving the immense increase to their society which the relaxation of

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\* Acts x. 34—36, 45; xi. 18, 19. The Ethiopian appears to have been a Jewish proselyte.

the ritual yoke in favour of the Gentiles promised, as well as being influenced by the more enlarged spirit which the discourses of Jesus tended to encourage, they decided upon maintaining the liberal principle, and receiving the Gentiles as converts on their simple profession of adherence to Jesus as the Messiah, leaving every member of their sect free to follow the law of Moses or not, according to his own inclination and previous habits. This was finally settled by a council of the Apostles held at Jerusalem\* A. D. 51. But even their decision was not received cordially by a large portion of the Jewish church, who continued to observe strictly the laws of Moses, and whose prejudices on this point continued so strong, that Peter and James found it difficult to avoid occasions of dispute and scandal, in practising the liberality which they had sanctioned.†

About the time of the first Gentile conversion, a modification begins to appear in the character ascribed to the Messiah. By the first disciples he had been generally considered as the successor of David, and destined to restore the throne of Israel. But this was of little interest to the Gentiles. The method of interpreting the prophecies then in use easily admitted of an extension of the titles and offices of the Messiah, and he was invested with a more universally interesting character, that of the destined Judge of mankind.‡ Distance of

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\* Acts xv. According to the custom of the times, the arguments used were chiefly, the manifestation of the divine will by means of visible signs, and the authority of the prophets. The predictions of the dominion which the house of David would obtain over Edom and the heathens were boldly strained to signify the conversion of the Gentiles. Peter ventures to introduce the merely rational argument of the heaviness of the Mosaic yoke, but relies more upon the testimony afforded by the Holy Spirit.

† Acts xxi. 20; Galatians ii. 12.

‡ In the Acts this character is not attributed to Jesus before the sermon to Cornelius, x. 42. It occurs again in Paul's discourse to the Athenians, xvii. 32.



time, and unacquaintance with his person, now also began to enhance the venerableness of the head of their sect, and to prepare men's minds for more exalted notions of his character.

The peculiarity of the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and the numbers of those holding it, began now to procure to the sect a distinctive name; and the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch [A. D. 43]. The distinction, however, was not generally attended to till a long time afterwards; and for nearly a century later we find the followers of Jesus noticed under various and more general names. Among themselves they still used the terms disciples, brethren, elect, or saints; by their opponents they were called Nazarenes or Galileans; by friendly Jewish writers, Essenes; whilst the heathens, to most of whom these distinctions were unknown or uninteresting, classed them loosely as Jews.\*

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\* The name Christian being for some time probably considered as a derisive epithet, like those of Millenarians, or fifth-monarchy men, it was natural for grave and friendly writers, like Philo and Josephus, to prefer the use of the older and better-known name of Essenes, which, since the death of Jesus, and the modification of their political hopes, would seem to suit them tolerably accurately. The following is perhaps an allowable conjecture as to the motives of Josephus in omitting an account of Jesus Christ (for the absence of quotation before Eusebius, even on the part of the Fathers who appealed strenuously to Josephus, combined with the internal evidence of forgery, appear sufficient to exclude from consideration the celebrated passage *Ant.* xviii. 3, 3.):—He looked favourably on the Essenes, and, in the many important respects in which the early Jewish Christians might be considered as identical with that more ancient sect, he has done them ample justice under that name. But the principal feature which the doctrine or philosophy of the church exhibited in addition to that of the ancient sect, the recognition of a Messiah and a kingdom of God soon to appear, Josephus would consider as a part of the notions derived from Judas, which in his opinion produced all the subsequent mischiefs. Moreover when he wrote his *Antiquities* (between A.D. 75 and 93) the Christians had very generally forsaken the law of Moses. Hence he would regard the church with mixed feelings; with esteem, as being originally in great part a continuation of the Essene sect; with impatience,

The steadfastness of part of the followers of Jesus to the law of Moses, was insufficient to remove the taint which had adhered to the whole body since the death of Stephen. The Jews of Jerusalem were amongst those who cherished most sensitively the remnant of their ancient glory embodied in the law, and the Roman procurators had frequently been astonished at the prompt self-devotion with which citizens

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as to all that constituted novelty: "This new system of philosophy, which before we were unacquainted withal," which occasioned "the customs of our fathers to be altered." This expresses more than could apply to the Sicarii, and other military sectarians, to whom alone, although followers of Judas in some important particulars, the appellation of "fourth philosophic sect" does not seem very suitable. The pre-eminently religious or philosophical character of the Christians when Josephus wrote, led him to blend all those who held the prominent doctrine of Judas, however they might differ in other respects, under one name of fourth philosophic sect. Hence his descriptions of both the third and fourth sects are both of them *in part*, but neither of them *throughout*, applicable to the Christians. Sects continually run into each other, especially when they are regarded in a political as well as a religious view. Josephus could not foresee that, in a century or two, the body of Galilean Essenes beginning to be called Christians, would become so much more important than any of the other sects, or subdivisions of sects, that he ought to describe a fourth philosophic sect under that name, and as made up of those peculiarities alone which characterized them.

With respect to Jesus himself, it is not improbable that the commendations which he would have given to him, as to John, in his character of a distinguished teacher of the Essene school, were restrained by the apparent points of resemblance of Jesus to some of the more dangerous followers of Judas. He had actually been executed on a charge of sedition against the Roman Government. Josephus was anxious that his book should be favourably received by the Roman court. Hence he ostentatiously blames the pretenders to divine aid who excited the hope of liberty among the people; but refrains from applying this directly to Jesus, from his real regard for all moral and religious merit. Allowing these different feelings to have existed, it is difficult to imagine what he could have said, so as to please both himself and his Roman readers.

It is certainly not impossible that the hand which inserted one passage in Josephus, could have taken out another, and that the original copies might have contained some allusion to Jesus, which was not approved by the Christian corrector. But there is no trace of evidence for this; and the context, in the place referred to, is against the supposition of there having been any intermediate passage.

who had submitted to other grievances, resisted to the death the slightest infringement of their religious customs. Repeated imperial edicts had enjoined that the religious rites of the Jews should not be interfered with, and the procurators were in general solicitous only to detect attempts at sedition, without concerning themselves with questions relating to the Jewish law. But the Sadducees, who frequently held the priesthood during the rise of the church, seconded the zeal of the Mosaic party, and exerted themselves vigilantly to punish every infraction of the law of Moses, influenced perhaps less by a reverence for the voice which had spoken from the burning bush,\* than by the calculation that a more strict adherence than ever to the ancient written constitution of their ancestors, would be the best means of preserving the priesthood from utter extinction.† A body of men suspected of an inclination to subvert the laws of Moses would therefore be exposed to unceasing hostility from numerous bigots, both interested and disinterested. Herod Agrippa, whose kingdom had been extended by Claudius over Judea, had already signalized himself by a successful defence of the law, and was anxious to conciliate his new subjects by his minute

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\* It would be unreasonable to attribute to these free-thinkers of the highest rank, a greater degree of faith than appears in Josephus himself.

† The interference of Herod the Idumean and his successors, and of the Roman procurators, had much lowered the dignity of the priesthood since the days of the Asmonean dynasty. The most noble Jewish families, both Sadducees and Pharisees, were accustomed to share the various offices in the priesthood among their members, and were naturally anxious to maintain unimpaired this potent means of wealth and influence. Doctrines derogatory to the law of Moses struck at its root. Hence probably the characteristic mentioned by Josephus; "The Sadducees are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews,"—*Antiq.* xx. 9, 1; a remark apparently applicable to the period when they so frequently held the priesthood. But there can be no doubt that this policy was supported by the sincere attachment of many of the Jews to their ancient law.



religious orthodoxy.\* An attempt of some young men of Doris to place Cæsar's statue in a synagogue, excited the ever wakeful jealousy of the Jews, and gave Herod Agrippa an opportunity of displaying his zeal.† Although in many respects an enlightened and liberal prince, he probably found persecution of an obnoxious party an easy means of popularity, and the doctrines of part of the new sect might serve for a pretext as well as the attempt at Doris. James, the brother of John, was put to death, and Peter underwent a temporary imprisonment. But the persecution does not appear to have extended further, and after the death of Herod [A.D. 44] the Christians continued to increase.‡

Peter shrank from the odium which he must incur with his own countrymen in maintaining the liberal principle which he had been the first to advocate. He left to others the task of carrying it out to its full extent. The convert who took the lead in abrogating the law of Moses in favour of the Gentiles, was Saul, afterwards Paul, of Tarsus, of a Gentile nation, but of a family professing the Jewish religion. Being a man of a warm and vehement temper, of great abilities, of a frank and generous disposition, and of a liberal mind, he was qualified to take the foremost part in any undertaking to which he joined himself. Educated under a Jewish doctor of law, he was well versed in the learning and methods of argument of the time, and was fond of striking out original views.§ He had been, at first, a zealous defender

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\* See amongst other proofs, his commanding the Nazarites to have their heads shorn. *Antiq.* xix. 6, 1.

† *Ibid.* xix. 6, 3.

‡ Acts xii. 24.

§ Paul seems to have been very jealous of the originality of his preaching, and desirous not to be considered a mere follower of the Apostles. Gal. ii. 6, But of those who seemed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person), for they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me . . . For he that



of Mosaic Judaism,\* and an enemy to the innovating sect; but their doctrines accorded much better with his own turn of mind, as affording more scope for imagination and speculation than the old and narrow system of Moses. Even whilst persecuting the Christians, he could not help becoming acquainted with their views: the trial of Stephen called more general attention to them; his reflections on the last discourse and death of the martyr induced Paul to pause; and the visions and meditations of three years spent at Damascus and in Arabia left him a zealous advocate of the new sect. But a man of his talents could not be a mere follower; he must impart his own view to the cause which he undertook, and it was this,—to announce the fulfilment of the Mosaic law by the coming of the Messiah, and to establish in its place an universal religion, embracing equally Jew and Gentile.† The doctrines of the new sect were a fit basis for this enlarged plan, since the recognition of the Christ as their common head afforded a point of union; and the advent of the Messiah supposed to be predicted by Moses and the prophets was necessary to authorize the assertion that the law had been fulfilled, and might be laid aside. As a Pharisee, he had held the doctrine of a resurrection in opposition to the Sadducees, and the story of the resurrection of

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wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles. See also Rom. xv. 20; ii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 8; 2 Cor. xi. 5.

\* Gal. i. 13, 14.

† Rom. x. 12, For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. Gal. iii. 28, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Eph. ii. 14, For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances. Gal. vi. 15; Eph. i. 10; Col. ii. 14; Rom. iii. 22—30.

Jesus fell in with this belief. The moral preaching of Jesus, giving the preference to virtue over ceremonies, was favourable to a liberal plan of religion. The belief, that the office of the Messiah was to restore the throne of David, had already begun to be modified. The form, then, which the Essene Judaism assumed in the hands of Paul was this,—that men were everywhere called to repentance and purity of life, in order to prepare them for the kingdom of God and the second coming of the Messiah or Christ,\* whose office was to judge the world;† that Jesus of Nazareth had been proved to be the Messiah by being raised from the dead; and that, in order to partake in the privileges of his kingdom, an open acknowledgment of his authority, and a belief in his resurrection, were alone necessary.‡

The liberalism, of which Jesus had sown the seed, being thus developed by Paul, Christianity received from him an additional vigorous impulse, and henceforward its progress becomes almost identified with that of his preaching and labours.

Among the many pretenders to divine missions who appeared in Judea, were more than one who deserved to be classed as philosophic enthusiasts rather than impostors. Simon of Samaria, commonly called Simon Magus, taught that emanations of the Divine nature were embodied in himself and in his wife Helena, that he had received a commission to subdue the evil influences or dæmons, which caused the miseries of the world, and to conduct mankind to their greatest happiness. He held that matter was the principle

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\* Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 20; 1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 12; iii. 13; iv. 16; v. 2; 2 Thess. i. 7; 2 Tim. i. 9; iv. 1; Tit. ii. 12—14.

† Acts xvii. 31; Rom. ii. 16.

‡ Rom. x. 9, If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Acts xiii. 38—41; xxvi. 16—23; and the Epistles passim.

farthest removed from the Divine essence, and that the aim of philosophy should be to deliver the soul from its imprisonment in matter, and to restore it to the divine light from which it was derived; for which purpose the Deity had sent one of his first Eons or emanations among men.\* By means of the scientific skill acquired during his visit to Egypt, or assisted probably by the audacity proceeding from sincere enthusiasm, he was able to perform miracles sufficiently clear and numerous to convince multitudes of the Samaritans, from the lowest to the greatest.† By this attractive method of proof, and by the addition of some doctrines less philosophical than those referred to, he had obtained, soon after the death of Jesus, an extensive admission of his claim to be called the “great power of God.” Of his subsequent history few traces can be found.‡ Another Samaritan named Dositheus, offered himself to the Jews as their Messiah; but finding no support from them, he endeavoured to persuade the Samaritans that he was the prophet predicted by Moses, devoting himself to the inculcation of an austere philosophy. Menander, also a Samaritan, copied more closely the example of Simon, both in his precepts, and in the title assumed, a “great power of God.”

The sect of Simon obtained much celebrity near his own time, and he was considered by some as the head of the

\* This account of Simon's notions is copied very nearly from Enfield, who appears to have collected it from the scattered notices in the Christian fathers.

† Acts viii. 10.

‡ The Samaritan fanatic, who “thought lying of little consequence,” described by Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 4, 1. I hesitate to consider the same as Simon Magus, because Josephus would most likely have alluded to his philosophical character, as he has done in the case of John the Baptist; or at least, spoken in less contemptuous terms of the head of a philosophical sect. The account coming from a hostile sect, Acts viii., should be received with some caution.

Gnostics. But although his mystical speculations might suit the taste of a certain age of philosophy, his precepts and the events of his life failed to embody with them enough to interest mankind permanently, and after a few centuries his name was scarcely remembered.

Judaism, or the religion of one Deity, as reformed by Paul, and disencumbered of circumcision and the Mosaic rites, found a ready reception amongst the Greeks and Romans, with whom polytheism was nearly grown out of fashion. The philosophy of Epicurus had degenerated into sensualism. Platonism consisted of speculations unintelligible out of the schools. Christianity as preached by Paul was well adapted to fill the void in the philosophic and religious world. It contained the sublime and agreeable doctrines of the paternal character of God and the resurrection of mankind: its asserted miracles and accomplished prophecies, the resurrection of Jesus, and the coming judgment of the world, were of a nature to please and excite the imagination; and its fraternal system of society tended to excite emulation and keep up enthusiasm. To follow a crucified Jew might be at first a fearful stumbling-block; but the mournful fates of Osiris, Adonis, and Hercules, followed by a glorious apotheosis, would suggest parallels sufficient to throw lustre on the story of Jesus; and the Messiah, persecuted to death and raised again, probably appealed more strongly to the imagination and the heart than if he had appeared merely as another triumphant hero demanding allegiance. Besides, the death of Christ came to be invested with a mysterious grandeur, by being represented as the great antetype of an ancient and venerable system of sacrifices, and as the offering of a paschal lamb on behalf of all mankind.\*

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\* The comparison of Christ's death to the lamb killed at the passover was



Notwithstanding the cordiality shown towards Paul by Peter and James, his claim to rank with the Apostles of Jesus met with some opposition, for it might be objected that he had not received his appointment from Jesus, nor even seen him. But accounts of the appearance of Jesus to him in visions supplied this want, and his talents and labours soon completed his title to the rank of apostle to the Gentiles.\* He joined to vehemence an indefatigable perseverance, and, being a man of learning and education, was superior to vulgar fanatics, in being able to accommodate his arguments in some degree to the various tastes of his auditors. He taught the Roman officers not to confound

too obvious not to be frequently introduced by persons familiar with the Jewish rites. But it does not appear to be insisted on as a doctrine in the New Testament. Even in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it stands in the same light as the comparison of Christ as a priest to Melchizedec.

\* The Ebionites, however, i. e. the Jewish Christians who adhered to the law of Moses, never admitted the authority of Paul. Iren. l. i. c. 26. al. 25. Orig. Cont. Cel. l. v. Euseb. H. E. l. iii. cap. 27. The author of the Recognitions of Clement, supposed to be an Ebionite, (Lardner, Cred. part ii. ch. 29,) has a passage which seems expressly intended to caution his readers against the pretensions of Paul. "*Propter quod observate cautius, ut nulli doctorum credatis, nisi qui Jacobi fratris Domini ex Hierusalem detulerit testimonium, vel ejus quicumque post ipsum fuerit. Nisi enim quis illuc ascenderit, et ibi fuerit probatus quod sit doctor idoneus, et fidelis, ad prædicandum Christi verbum; nisi inquam, inde tulerit testimonium, recipiendus omnino non est. Sed neque propheta, neque apostolus, in hoc tempore, speretur a vobis aliquis alius præter nos. Unus enim est verus propheta, cujus nos duodecim apostoli verba prædicamus. Ipse enim est annus Dei acceptus, nos apostolos habens duodecim menses.*"—L. iv. sect. 35. According to which, Paul was excluded from the apostleship, for he declared that those at Jerusalem had added nothing to him, and that he had not received his commission from men. Gal. i. ii.

The tone of Irenæus towards the rejectors of Paul is apologetic rather than reprobatory: "*Eadem autem dicimus et his qui Paulum apostolum non cognoscunt, quoniam aut reliquis verbis Evangelii, quæ per solum Lucam in nostram venerunt agnitionem, renuntiari debent, et non uti eis; aut si illa recipiunt omnia, habent necessitatem recipere etiam eam testificationem quæ est de Paulo.*"—Cont. Hær. l. iii. 15. i.

the followers of Christ with Galilean movers of sedition.\* Before Jewish synagogues he quoted chiefly the law and the prophets;† with the Gentiles he could also argue from their own authors, or appeal to natural reason.‡ Such a man could not fail to be heard in any country; and within twenty-four years from his conversion, [A. D. 37—61,] he and his companions had planted numerous churches in Asia Minor, several in Macedonia and Greece, and one at Rome.

The society in Judea fell now comparatively into the shade. Its chiefs, Peter and James, the brother of Jesus, were in education and ability inferior to Paul; and their sanction of the admission of Gentiles into the church without conformity to the law of Moses, had brought them into an unfavourable position with respect to their countrymen, who in general were more attached to their ancient code than the Greeks were to their variegated idolatry. The greater part of the Jewish church itself seems to have withstood the authority of the council of apostles, and to have insisted on the necessity of the Mosaic law.§ It is probable that the liberality of the heads of the Jewish church, and the bigotry of its members, both contributed to bring it into disrepute; the former with the Jews, the latter with the Gentiles. The first rapid increase of the Jewish church was therefore checked; but it was too numerous to be rooted out by occasional acts of violence.

Whilst the followers of Jesus, during the thirty years subsequent to his death, were thus acquiring permanently the cha-

\* Acts xxiii. 29; xxiv. 10—23; xxvii. 3.

† Acts xiii. 33—41; xxviii. 23.

‡ Acts xiv. 15—17; xvii. 24—29.

§ Acts xxi. 18—26. James and the elders remonstrate thus with Paul: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law," and urge him to perform a Mosaic rite in order to conciliate them.

racter of a mere religious sect, and, in so far as they retained any peculiarities derived from Judas, modifying and enlarging them into doctrines which at first sight might appear hardly capable of being identified with the original notions;—others in Judea preserved more accurately the impressions left fifty-four years previously by the daring and martial Galilean. The spiritual disposition of the Essenes, during an interval of comparative political quiet, predominated in the fusion with the Galilean ideas; the church had lost all thoughts of obtaining deliverance except from the arm of the Lord, and occupied itself chiefly with the development of its religious doctrines. It is probable even that, in consequence of the occasional persecutions which they had undergone from their countrymen, and the interest inspired by the extensive Gentile conversions, they looked, by this time, to the expected deliverance less as a national restoration of Judea, than as the exaltation of the Messiah's people gathered from every clime. But enthusiasts were not wanting from time to time, who sought to attain a political revival, by means of a combination of divine aid with physical insurrection. In the procuratorship of Fadus [about A. D. 46], a pretender to miraculous and prophetic powers, named Theudas, persuaded many of the people to follow him, promising a sign similar to that which accompanied the deliverance under Moses, a miraculous passage through the waters. The Roman procurator was more fortunate than Pharaoh, and the attempt speedily cost the imitator his life.\* Under the following procurator,

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\* The following is all that I can find relating to Theudas. "Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it: and many were deluded

Tiberius Alexander, the sons of Judas, James and Simon, were put to death, but on what occasion Josephus does not state. Many restless and unprincipled men, professing to aim at the same object as Judas, freedom from the rule of all Lords except that of the God of Israel, made this a mere pretext for gratifying their love of disorder and plunder. The supremacy of the Kingdom of heaven afforded too plausible an excuse for numbers whose bad character set them in opposition to all earthly subjection. Bands of the vilest robbers and assassins disgraced a cause which had probably originated in an effervescence of sincere patriotic and religious zeal; and, from the government of Cumanus till the end of the war, the increasing recklessness and ferocity of the advocates of the Galilean notions under the names of Sicarii, zealots, and seditious, form a striking contrast with the diverging course of that pacific body of men, which at one time had seemed to have some remarkable points of contact with them.\* The increasing miseries which those bands of warlike sectaries brought upon

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by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem."—*Antiq.* xx. 5, 1.

"For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about 400, joined themselves; who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed (or believed) him (*επειθοντο αυτω*) were scattered and brought to nought."—*Acts* v. 36.

\* From the few materials remaining it is not easy to mark accurately the course of the different divisions of the Essenes and Galileans. There appears most palpable confusion in the following passage from Rabbi Abraham in libro Juchasin, fol. 139, 1. "At this time there were three sects, for besides the Pharisees and Sadducees, Judas the Galilean began a third sect, which is called that of the Essenes. . . . the opinion of the Nazarenes, who were called Essenes, and the author of whom was Judas the Galilean. They indeed occasioned the Jews to rebel against the Romans, saying, that no one ought to command other men, nor to be called Lord, except God alone." On which Schoettgen remarks (*Hor. Heb. in Act. v. 37.*) that this



Judea, their cruelties especially upon the more timid portion of their countrymen, prevent our feeling that full admiration which would otherwise have been due to their untameable resolution in asserting to the last their country's independence.\*

In the procuratorships of Felix and Festus, the attempts of false prophets became again very frequent. An Egyptian, who had induced a multitude to follow him to the Mount of Olives, to witness the result of his command to the walls of Jerusalem to share the fate of those of Jericho, narrowly escaped with his life from the merciless vigilance of Felix; whose excuse for slaughtering so promptly a deluded multitude would probably have been, that there was too much reason to apprehend that these trials of faith would be followed by trials more dangerous to his government.† His severity

must be false, because the Essenes existed long before Judas; yet he thinks it very likely that Judas was “*Essenorum partibus addictus*, although not the author of the sect.”

May not the confusion of R. Abraham be unravelled thus:—Many of the Essenes adopted part of the doctrines of Judas, and settled afterwards into that sect, of which one appellation was *Nazarenes*?

\* It is not improbable that 1 Peter ii. 13—17, might have been suggested by the desire felt on the part of the church to vindicate itself from the imputation of abusing the doctrine of subjection to God alone. Peter urges the brethren (probably converted Gentiles) of Asia Minor, to obey “the king” “and governors”—“for so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as *free*, and *not using your liberty* for a cloak of maliciousness (*της κακίας*), but as *servants of God*.” This describes exactly the abuse of the doctrines of Judas by the Sicarii, which might very naturally be a subject of allusion to Christians elsewhere than in Judea.

† “And now these impostors and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the desert, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God. And many that were prevailed on by them suffered the punishments of their folly; for Felix brought them back, and then punished them. Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. He said farther, that he would show them from hence, how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall

was imitated by Festus in the case of another self-deluded victim and his followers, who trusted that an assemblage of

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down; and he promised them that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen, from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew 400 of them, and took 200 alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more. And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all; and when any persons would not comply with them, they set fire to their villages, and plundered them.”—*Ant.* xx. 8, 6. It is worthy of note that the people of Jerusalem assisted Felix in his attack on the Egyptian.

“There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, who laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretence of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty; but Felix thought this procedure was to be the beginning of a revolt; so he sent some horsemen and footmen, both armed, who destroyed a great number of them.”—*War*, ii. 13, 4.

The hasty supposition of the Roman captain, Acts xxi. 38, that Paul might be the escaped Egyptian, seems very natural, since Paul belonged to a sect partly of Galilean origin. The Roman officers could not be expected to distinguish at once between the Essene version of the Messiah's kingdom, and that of bands who sought nominally the same kingdom, by less harmless means. But Paul was very leniently treated by the Roman judges, as soon as they could be made to understand in some degree his real character.

The Roman captain describes the followers of the Egyptian as “murderers,” which agrees with Josephus's description of the “Sicarii,” (*Ant.* xx. 8, 10.) the bands whom he seems to consider more especially the inheritors of the doctrines of Judas. (*War*, vii. 8. 1.)

Schoettgen surely makes the same mistake as the captain when he says, “*Illi Esseni, et quidem sectatores hujus Judæ, vocati vulgo sunt σικαριοι* Jos. de Bello Jud. 7, 29. Scholia Græca in Act. xxi. ἄλλοι δὲ Εσσηνοὺς σικαρίους ἐκαλοῦν, ἡγουν ζήλωτας: citante Drusio de tribus sectis Hebr. 4, 21.

In Josephus, the Essenes are never called Sicarii or Zealots; of the first he speaks with the highest respect; of the latter two classes with detestation. This, together with the very different characters of the sects, must prevent our supposing that any considerable portion of the Essenes became Sicarii. But we may perceive how easily they might be confounded: the

Israelites retiring into the desert, might again awaken the compassion of the God of their fathers.\*

Whilst the next procurator, Albinus, was on his road to Judea, [A. D. 62,] the high priest Ananus, a young Sadducee of a violent temper, assembled the Sanhedrim in an irregular manner, and brought an accusation against the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, James the Just, (who had succeeded Peter in the presidency of the church, after A. D. 51,) and some other members, as breakers of the law.† He succeeded in having them stoned;‡ but, in the dislike which the most equitable of the citizens felt towards this proceeding of Ananus, in their stigmatizing it as a breach of the law, and in their procuring the deposition of the turbulent high priest on this very account, we find striking indications that the church must have usually enjoyed that security and toleration which its peaceful character merited, and that it was

followers of Judas became chiefly Sicarii; the Essenes had adopted some of the notions of Judas, but they became—*Christians*.

\* So Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain impostor, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them, and those that were his followers also."—*Ant.* xx. 8, 10.

† *Ant.* xx. 9, 1. The agreement between Josephus and the Acts is remarkable. The former says that the accusation was for breaking the law, and that "some others" were included in it. James was at the head of the liberals respecting the Mosaic law, and some of the elders agreed with him.

‡ Hegesippus said that James was killed in a tumult, by being thrown down from the temple, assaulted with stones, and at last struck on the head by a fuller's pole; which account was generally received by the Christians in and before the fourth century. See Lardner, *Jewish Test.*, chap. iv. This does not essentially disagree with Josephus, for the irregular sentence might have been carried into effect in an irregular manner. Lardner however is inclined to reject this passage in Josephus, chiefly, it appears, because he does not consider it to agree with Hegesippus. But of the two it would be reasonable to reject the account of the latter, part of which Lardner himself admits to have a fabulous appearance.



favourably regarded rather than otherwise by many of the most influential as well as just citizens.\* This martyrdom of James consequently left the church in the same tranquil position under his successor Simeon.

Notwithstanding the occasional interruptions referred to, Judea enjoyed upon the whole under the procuratorships of Fadus, Alexander, Cumanus, Felix, and Festus [A. D. 45-63], a long interval of comparative tranquillity. Their government, although rigid, was not in the main wantonly oppressive; and their severity towards robbers and excitors of tumults was beneficial to the peaceably disposed.† But the next procurator, Albinus, [A. D. 63,] pushed his extortions so far as to rouse even the nobles to thoughts of resistance. Even he was outdone in cruelty by the following governor, Gessius Florus, [64,] who, in order to provide an excuse with the Roman court, endeavoured deliberately, according to Josephus, to goad the Jews to a revolt. Under these two, Judea became a scene of tumult and misery.‡ The populace, exasperated by repeated insults and oppressions, were with increasing difficulty restrained by the aristocracy from compromising the nation by open rebellion; the influence of the

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\* Josephus does not say a single word expressive of his own opinion of James, "the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, and his companions;" except that he evidently agrees with those "equitable citizens" who reprobated the violence used towards them. This very silence seems to indicate some degree of respect. In the following paragraphs he has occasion to mention the Sicarii, and shows very manifestly his abhorrence of them. This difference of tone is a confirmation that his description of the Essenes, in a much greater degree than that of the Galileans, applies to the early church.

† Acts xxiv. 2, "Seeing that by thee (Felix) we enjoy great quietness." The testimony of Tertullus might have been considered as mere rhetoric, if it were not confirmed by Josephus, Preface to *War*, sect. 4:—"It had so come to pass that our city, Jerusalem, had arrived at a greater degree of felicity than any other city under the Roman Government, and yet at last fell into the sorest calamities again."

‡ Jos., *War*, ii. ch. xiv. to the end.



priests and Pharisees succumbed to that of the Sicarii, Zealots, and Pseudo-prophets;\* and it became daily more evident that a revolution was near, which, considering the strength of the Romans, must end in the destruction of the nation.† The fatal prelude was given [A.D. 66], when Florus, having been foiled in an attempt to seize the treasure in the temple, invited Cestius, president of Syria, to his assistance. Cestius came with a division of the Roman army, (8 Nov.) and was beaten.‡ The national spirit broke out in a general cry for war; but the more prudent saw that a heavy vengeance must soon follow.

In these perilous times of their country, the peculiar doctrines of the Christians of Judea had a tendency to preserve them from danger. They believed that their Messiah was already come, and that he was soon to appear from heaven with deliverance for his saints; they were secure, therefore, from the attempts of new pretenders. The habit of contemplating a kingdom to be revealed from heaven at God's appointed time, agreed with the spiritual tendency which had always characterized the Essenes, in drawing off the thoughts of the Christians from the politics of the moment to the more interesting and permanent world of the imagination. The things of the flesh, the contentions of parties and nations, might be despised in comparison with the things of the spirit, the anticipation of the glories which were destined to reward the patient faith of the elect. The Jewish Christians had become an almost isolated people in the midst of the Jews, and the office of the Messiah seems to have been among them, as well as among the Gentiles, raised into that

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\* That the Pharisees continued to be strenuous conservatives, see *War*, ii. 17, 3.

† Speech of Agrippa, *War*, ii. 16.

‡ *War*, ii. ch. xix.

of Judge of mankind.\* They therefore looked upon their fate as distinct from that of the rest of their nation, and were probably among those who, according to Josephus, withdrew from Jerusalem after the defeat of Cestius, as from a devoted city.† Their place of retreat is supposed to have been at Pella, beyond the Jordan.

At this time, probably, the opinion became most prevalent that the end of the world was near.‡ During the thirty-three years which had elapsed since the disappearance of the body of Jesus from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the Christians had believed that he would speedily re-appear; and now the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, and the abolition of the temple and laws which the Scriptures had declared perpetual, seemed not only to show that his re-appearance was at length nigh at hand, but that it would be accompanied by the end of all earthly things.§ The storm

\* Matt. xxv. In the epistles of Peter, Jude, and James, there are no allusions to the kingdom of Israel, or throne of David, so often mentioned in the early speeches in the Acts. When the kingdom of Christ is spoken of, it is no longer peculiarly connected with the Jewish nation. 1 Peter v. 4; 2 Peter iii. 13; James ii. 5.

† *War*, ii. xxi. "After this calamity had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city as from a ship when it was going to sink." The probability that the Christians were among these, is confirmed by the exhortations to flight found in the first three Gospels, and the testimony of Eusebius that some of the Christians went to Pella.

‡ The punishment of the Jewish nation is frequently described in the Old Testament in terms which might be understood to signify the destruction of the whole earth. Deut. xxxii. 22. Jer. iv. 23—28. Isaiah xxiv. 4—23. Amos viii. 2, 9.

§ James v. 8, Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. 1 Peter i. 7, That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; i. 20, Christ was manifested in these last times for you; iv. 7, But the end of all things is at hand; iv. 17, For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.

Lardner conjectures the date of Peter's 1st Epistle to be 63, 64, or 65; of Jude's Epis. 64, 65, or 66; of James's Epis. 61. These dates fall within the time when the Jews began to anticipate the miseries to come.

burst upon the Jews in the beginning of the year A. D. 67, when Vespasian entered Galilee with a large army. The vigorous defence made by the towns of that province detained him there till nearly the end of the year; after which the death of Nero [A. D. 68, June 10,] induced him to suspend his operations, which, on his own accession, [A. D. 69, July 3,] were resumed by his son Titus. During this interval, Jerusalem had suffered such miseries from internal seditions, that the arrival of the Romans was expected by many as a relief. Zacharias, the son of Baruch, one of the most eminent citizens, was murdered in the temple,\* [A. D. 68,] and

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\* Jos., *War*, iv. ch. v.; Matt. xxiii. 35. Lardner concludes that the Zacharias, son of Barachias, mentioned in Matthew, was Zacharias, the son of Jehoiada, killed in the court of the temple, 2 Chron. xxiv. (*Credib.*, part i. book ii. ch. vi.) But the following reasons lead me to think that Josephus and Matthew intended the same person: Firstly, The names given to the father, Baruch and Barachias, although distinct in the Greek, might easily be confounded. Secondly, Although Jerome said that the Nazarenes had, in their copy of Matthew, "the son of Jehoiada," Lardner allows that it was probably an insertion, and that the copies of Matthew generally from the earliest times, had "son of Barachias." Thirdly, The purport of the discourse in Matthew is, that the Jews of that generation would suffer for all the righteous blood shed upon the earth; and as he begins with Abel, he was not likely to stop at the Zacharias in the Chronicles, B. C. 840, when there was abundance of righteous blood shed among the Jews after that date; whereas the murder of the Zacharias mentioned by Josephus was probably, at the time when Matthew wrote, a recent and notorious event. Fourthly, It would not appear to the writer of the gospel inconsistent to make Jesus, thirty-three years beforehand, speak of this Zacharias, since he represents him as speaking of many other events connected with the fall of Jerusalem in the spirit of prophecy. Fifthly, The characters agree in Matthew and Josephus; the former speaks of righteous blood, the latter says that Zacharias was one of the most eminent citizens, for his riches, his hatred of wickedness, and his love of liberty; moreover "that he confuted in a few words the crimes laid to his charge, and turning his speech against his accusers, went over distinctly all their transgressions of the law, and made heavy lamentations upon the confusion they had brought public affairs to;" which resembles very much the discourse in Matthew, containing the mention of Zacharias. Sixthly, Although Luke, in the parallel passage, xi. 47—51, appears to speak of Zacharias as being one of the prophets, this



his death was the beginning of a series of daily riots and massacres. The profanation of the temple seemed especially to forebode the approaching ruin of the state; because the book of Daniel had described the pollution of the sanctuary as preparatory to the times of the end.\* The siege of Jerusalem was begun on the 14th of April, A.D. 70; it was defended with the most desperate bravery for nearly five months, and taken on the 8th September, after suffering the worst extremities which can befall a besieged city. The temple was burnt, the entire city demolished excepting three towers, and henceforward the Jews cease to appear as a political power in history.

During the siege, the military sectarians who had insti-

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might arise from his being ignorant of the transaction which Matthew had in view; for one of the many murders committed during the fall of Jerusalem might easily be unknown to a foreigner writing some years afterwards, and at a distance. But Zacharias, son of Barachias, one of the minor prophets, was well known to all the Christians. Luke, therefore, supposed that Matthew had this Zacharias in view, and consequently adapted his version of the discourse to this notion. Seventhly, Matthew did not really intend this last-named Zacharias, because no record appears to have existed among the Jews of the manner of his death, and in his time the temple was in ruins. Eighthly, Admitting the conjecture, that the original of Matthew mentions no father, but simply Zacharias, as in Luke, the insertion of son of Barachias instead of Baruch, is explained by the transcribers generally, as well as Luke, having a better knowledge of the prophet than of any other Zacharias.

\* Dan. xi. 31—40. The book of Daniel refers to the events in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (see chap. xiv.); but many of the Jews considered it as a prophecy of the future. Josephus says, (*War*, iv. ch. 6,) "There was a certain antient oracle of those men (the prophets) that the city should then be taken, and the sanctuary burnt by right of war, when a sedition should invade the Jews, and their own hand should pollute the temple of God." The passages most resembling this are, Daniel ix. 26, xi. 31—45; but Josephus has quoted them incorrectly, and added to them from his own invention, as he frequently does when quoting the Old Testament from memory. See his account of Pharaoh Necho's seizure of "Queen Sarah, whom Abraham preferred to recover by means of prayer to God, instead of employing his 318 captains with an immense army under each."—*War*, Book v. ch. ix.



gated the revolt, exhibited a persevering gallantry which extorts our admiration in spite of their atrocious cruelties. Whatever of religion influenced them, was directed to the extinction of all the milder feelings, and to the inflaming of the sterner passions into madness.\* The experienced legions of Rome under the eye of Titus himself, were repeatedly broken by the fierce attacks of the Jews; the besiegers, when retiring to rest after the incessant contests of the day, were surprised by nocturnal sallies; their works were burnt, and the red-hot engines dragged away by the hands of the Jews, in despite of guards and fortifications; and the short intervals of security obtained by the repulse of the Romans, were employed in the murder or torture of the citizens supposed to be favourable to a capitulation. The prophets were encouraged to announce from day to day the approach of divine aid; and in the last extremity, when the temple was burning, and the streets were filled with the infuriated Romans, a multitude assembled in the cloisters of the temple, and whilst the soldiers and the fire were closing upon them, confidently trusted that now the moment was come when God would appear to save his people.

The fortress of Masada, occupied by a remnant of the Sicarii, under Eleazar the grandson of Judas, held out the longest against the Roman arms. When reduced to the last distress, the besieged slew their families, and then themselves, having first set fire to the place. The speech which Josephus attributes to Eleazar,† rejecting in this melancholy extremity

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\* Unless the internal dissensions and factions had assisted the Romans, it appears not incredible that the Jews might have compelled their invaders to admit an honourable compromise, and furnished an instance of the successful resistance of a less civilized but valiant nation, against superior strength and discipline.

† *War*, vii. 8, 6.

all thoughts of submission to any Lords but God alone, breathes unimpaired the fierce independence of his ancestor, and is not unworthy of being considered as the funeral oration of an ancient people. Some of the Sicarii escaped from Judea into Egypt, whence they endeavoured to revive from time to time the energies of the remaining Jews, and to render their country an uneasy acquisition to the conquerors.

The priest and Pharisee, Josephus, who had endeavoured to prevent the war, but, when it was once begun, had performed his part in the common defence with eminent valour and skill until he was taken prisoner, was received into favour by Vespasian, and lived to write the history which records so amply the fate of his nation, and throws so much light upon the important moral movement which arose out of its latter period. His religion comprised at least as much of philosophy and worldly tact as of superstition; and adopting the safe method of interpreting prophecies by the event, he complimented Vespasian as being the Messiah whom his country's prophets had announced.\* The remainder of the Jewish people, however, could not be turned aside, even by the sight

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\* *War*, vi. 5, 4, "But now, what did most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, 'about this time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular; and *many of the wise men* were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea." The deception of some "wise men" also, indicates strongly that Josephus alludes to the current Jewish notion of a Messiah, because this was a favourite topic with the Rabbins. He perhaps avoided using the Jewish designation Messiah, or its Greek form Christ, because he judged his own interpretation of it to be more suitable and intelligible to his Roman readers than the name itself; also possibly, because at the time of his writing the books of the War (probably about A.D. 75), the name was beginning to be considered as distinctive of a recent Jewish sect.

of their desolated towns, from the more patriotic interpretation of their sacred writings. After about sixty years, the brilliant but brief success of Barcochebas seemed for a moment to prove the correctness of this interpretation. From the time of his failure, the hope of the future appearance of David's successor and of the re-assembling of the tribes of Jacob, has lingered amongst the persecuted nation;—a hope so continually enlivened by their history, poetry, and most interesting associations, that when the desires of the children of Israel shall at length be seconded by a train of concurring circumstances, it is perhaps not unreasonable to conjecture that it may yet in some measure be fulfilled.

The sect which, whilst Judea was being conquered by Rome, was preparing Judaism to conquer the Roman Gods, also allowed events to modify materially its interpretation of the prophecies. The ruin of the Jewish state fixed more permanently the character of the Messiah to that of a Spiritual King. If, as such, he appeared to rigid critics in many respects to differ essentially from those prefigurations, the church was soon able to point at least to one very important resemblance, that of a triumphant ruler.

Most of the leading Jewish Christians emigrated to foreign countries, and became incorporated with the Gentile churches. But those who still adhered to the law of Moses clung to their native land. When the war was over, they are supposed to have returned from Pella to Jerusalem, and to have maintained a church there till the time of Adrian, who, after the revolt of Barcochebas, prohibited the Jews from coming to Jerusalem.\* From that time the church at

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\* Euseb. on the Heresy of the Ebionites, l. 3, cap, 27, "Some who are not to be moved by any means from their respect for the Christ of God, are in some respects very infirm. They are called by the ancients Ebionites, because they have but a low opinion of Christ, thinking him to be a mere

Jerusalem consisted of Gentiles. From the notices which remain of the society of the Jewish Christians, under the names of Nazarenes and Ebionites, it seems to have fallen into great disrepute with the rest of the Christians. Their persevering Judaism, and aversion to Paul, prevented the Gentile churches from amalgamating with them, or from showing them that respect and attachment which would otherwise have seemed due to the relics of the parent society. And as the Gentile churches became the most influential part of the Christian body, and supplied the chief Christian writers, they were able to procure general reception to their own representation of the point of difference; and consequently the remnant of the early converts, the countrymen and possibly some of the hearers, of Jesus himself, have come to be classed in church history amongst the early heretics.

About the time of the fall of Jerusalem, [A. D. 68—70,] the history of Christ, bearing the name of Matthew, was published amongst the Christians of Judea. It contained most of the accounts which had been preserved of the acts and discourses of Christ, mingled with traditions of a later growth, and with passages representing the ideas then preva-

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man, born of Joseph and Mary, honoured for his advancement in virtue; and esteeming the ritual ordinances of the law necessary to be observed by them, as if they could not be justified by faith in Christ only. Others of them do not deny that Jesus was born of a virgin by the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, they do not acknowledge his pre-existence as God the Word; and, like the others, they are fond of the external observances of the law of Moses. They also reject Paul's epistles, and call him an apostate from the law." Jerome speaks of the Nazarenes in his time, A. D. 400, as admitting the authority of Paul. The preponderating influence of the Gentile churches, no doubt, gradually procured admission amongst the Nazarenes for the canon of scriptures as fixed by the former. According to Jerome, some of the Ebionites or Nazarenes followed the liberal example of Peter and James, and observed the Mosaic rites themselves without seeking to impose them on others; (Hieron. in Is. cap. i. t. 3. ; ) but the intolerance of the rest might easily alienate the Gentiles from their whole body.



lent in the Jewish church. It was well received by the Christians, and in a few years was followed by many imitations, of which there only remain those of Mark and Luke; the former written for the use of the church at Rome, and the latter for those of Achaia. Both these writers seem to have made use of Matthew's work, altering some parts in order to adapt it the better for the use of Gentile churches, and adding such narratives as they had been able to procure from other sources.

These three histories bear the impress of the events and opinions of the age in which they were written.\* They contain copious references to the fall of Jerusalem, and to the persecutions which the church began to undergo amongst the Gentiles about that time.† The coming of Jesus is represented as near at hand, and as cotemporary with the end of all things. He is described occasionally as the Judge of mankind, in addition to his original character of King of Israel and Successor of David. And the kingdom of heaven is a confused mixture of regenerated Israel and of a kingdom not of this world.

The distance of thirty-seven years from the death of Christ, and of seventy from his birth, allowed of the introduction of many fables concerning his person and character; and about this time arose the doctrine of the miraculous conception. The Gospel of Matthew is the earliest Christian writing in which this doctrine is found; but it appears that, on its first publication, that book was not of sufficient authority to procure general reception to the whole of its contents; and as the story was more consonant with Gentile than with Jewish taste,‡ a great part of the Jewish church refused to admit

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\* See chap. iii. iv. and v.

† Nero's persecution began A.D. 64.

‡ The introduction of Alexandrian Jews into the church warrants the

it.\* Mark, who followed Matthew, passed the story over without notice. But Luke having inserted it with some variations in his Gospel, which, from its superiority of style and greater completeness, grew probably into the most extensive use amongst the Gentile churches, the latter came gradually to receive the doctrine of the miraculous conception as implicitly as those of the resurrection and ascension.

Reformed Judaism, or Christianity, as it began to be more generally called after the first Jewish church had died away, had made much progress amongst the Gentiles in the lifetime of Paul, [A. D. 37—64,] owing to the excellence of the Jewish system of monotheism, which carried with it the doctrines attached to it by its preachers, of the Messiahship and resurrection of Jesus. But as these latter do not rest, like the former, on natural reason, there was more difficulty at first in procuring them a free reception. The chief argument of the Apostles in support of the claims of Jesus, the fulfilment of prophecy, might be urged with effect upon the Jews, and the Gentiles acquainted with the Jewish scriptures; but to the great proportion of the Greeks and Romans, who had never studied the law and the prophets, the Messiahship and resurrection of Jesus would appear strange and unfounded stories.† In the interval, however, between the fall of Jeru-

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conjecture that the story of the miraculous birth of Christ originated in the desire of some of the converts to render to their master the same honours as had been paid to Plato, of whom a similar story had been told. “Speusippus quoque sororis Platonis filius, et Clearchus in laude Platonis, et Anaxilides in secundo libro philosophiæ, Perictionem matrem Platonis phantasmate Apollinis oppressam ferunt, et sapientiæ principem non aliter arbitrantur nisi de partu virginis editum.”—*Hieron. Adv. Jovin.* lib. i.

\* Eusebius on Heresy of Ebionites.

† *Irenæus cont. Hæres.* l. 4, cap. xxiv. “Quapropter plus laborabat, qui in Gentes apostolatam acceperat, quam qui in circumcissione præconabant Filium Dei. Illos enim adjuvant Scripturæ, quas confirmavit Dominus

saalem and the close of the first century, Christianity formed gradually an alliance which materially assisted the spread of its doctrines amongst the Greeks and Romans.

This alliance was with the Platonism of the Alexandrian school. The name of Plato was held in high veneration by the Greeks; and the Jews of Alexandria, being constantly mingled with the Greeks, affected to partake of the fashionable admiration for the Platonic doctrines, which, they pretended to discover, were derived from Moses. Many of the Alexandrian Jews were Essenes, and became adherents of John the Baptist, and of Jesus. Hereby a channel was opened by which Platonism and Christianity might flow into each other.

The Alexandrian Jews chiefly pursued trade, and consequently journeyed often to all parts of the Roman empire. Ephesus, another important commercial city, was doubtless a place of continual resort to them; and from the visit of Apollos to the end of the century, [A. D. 56—97,] we may reasonably infer that the Christian church planted by Paul at Ephesus received continually fresh infusions of the notions of the Alexandrian Jewish school.\* The result was a new doctrine concerning the person of Jesus, to which prominence was given by the publication of another Gospel, by authority

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*et adimplevit, talis veniens qualis, et prædicabatur: hic vero peregrina quædam eruditio et nova doctrina, Deos gentium non solum non esse Deos, sed et idola esse dæmoniorum, esse unum Deum qui est super omnem principatum; et hujus verbum naturaliter quidem invisibilem, palpabilem et visibilem in hominibus factum, et usque ad mortem descendisse, mortem crucis: et eos qui in eum credunt, incorruptibiles et impassibiles futuros et percipere regnum cælorum. Et hæc Sermone prædicabantur Gentibus sine scripturis; quapropter plus laborabant qui in Gentibus prædicabant. Generosior autem rursus fides Gentium ostenditur, Sermonem Dei assequentium sine instructione literarum."*

\* From 1 Tim. i. 3—7, it seems not improbable that Paul's cautions to the first bishop of Ephesus were directed partly against Platonic innovators.

of the church of Ephesus, under the name of John [about A. D. 97].

Plato had taught\* that the Supreme Being, whom he called The Good (*το αγαθον*), made his only begotten offspring, the world,† by means of his own divine wisdom or intelligence, which he called *logos* or *nous*, a principle bearing the same relation to God as the human understanding‡ does to a man. And he sometimes spoke of this *logos* in terms which might be interpreted to signify something distinct from the divine mind itself,§ although, perhaps, he only intended to use a mysterious and sublime manner of personifying a mere property. Most of his followers preferred the more unintelligible interpretation, and carried the personification so far as to make the *logos* or *nous* a distinct being, proceeding from its origin The Good, as a son from his father, which figure had been used by Plato himself for a different purpose, viz. to describe the production of the world by God. The Jews conversant with Greek literature generally considered the term *logos* as synonymous with the Chaldee *mimra*, the word of Jehovah, which was merely a poetical paraphrase for Jehovah himself. But the Platonic Jews adopted the heathen notion of personifying the *logos*,|| and even made the personification more perfect by representing the *logos* as

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\* Priestley's History of Early Opinions, book i. chap. vi.—Enfield's History of Philosophy, book ii. chap. viii.

† “So that we may justly say, that the world is, through the providence of God, a living creature—that it has a soul and reason . . . . That this living creature might be like the most perfect living creature, he did not make two or more of them, but this one only begotten heaven” (*μονογενης ουρανος*).—*Timæus of Plato*, p. 477.

‡ “They who think rightly are said to think with *logos*; and there can be no right opinion without knowledge.”—*Theætetus of Plato*, p. 94.

§ “As light and vision resemble the sun, but are not the sun, so knowledge and truth resemble the good, but are not the good, the good itself being something more venerable.”—*De Rep.* lib. vi. p. 433.

|| See Wisdom of Solomon, vii. 22—30.



a divine emanation, the visible image of the invisible God, and the medium by which he made the world, and communicated with Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

To this the writer of the Gospel of St. John added, that the *logos* which had been from the beginning with God, or in the bosom of the Father, had at last become flesh, and dwelt amongst men in the visible form of Jesus Christ.\* The doctrine grew into favour with both parties, the Chris-

\* By comparing the words of Philo, the Jew, with those of St. John, it will be seen how natural the transition was.

*Philo.*—"To speak plainly, the ideal world is no other than the *logos* of God, who makes the world."—*De Mundi Opificio*, p. 5.

"The *logos* is the image of God, by which all the world was made." *Λογος δε εστιν εικων θεου δι ου συμπας ο κοσμος εδημιουργειτο.*—*De Monarchia*, p. 823.

"Though no person is worthy to be called the Son of God, endeavour to be accomplished, like his first begotten *logos*, the most ancient angel, as being the archangel of many names: for it is called the *αρχη* (beginning), the name of God, and the *logos*, and the man according to his image, and the seer of Israel. For if we are not worthy to be called the sons of God, let us be so of his eternal image, the most holy *logos*; for this most ancient *logos* is the image of God."—*De Confusione Linguarum*, p. 341. In another place he describes the *logos* as a first-begotten son (*πρωτογονον υιον*), superintending nature as an officer under God, and likewise as the angel that God told Moses he would send before him. *De Agric.*, p. 195.

"The true God is one, but those who are figuratively so called are many; wherefore the sacred word on this occasion (the appearance to Abraham) distinguishes the true God by the article, I am *ο Θεος*; but him that is so called figuratively, without the article. *De Somniis*, p. 599.

He also represents the world as the younger son of God, but the *logos* as his elder son, remaining with the father. *Παρ' εαυτη καταμενει διεννηθη.* *Immutability of God.*

*St. John.*—In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God (*τον θεον*), and the *logos* was God (*θεος*). The same was in the beginning with God (*τον θεον*). All things were made by him (or it); and without it was not anything made that was made. In it was life, and the life was the light of men.... That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.... and the *logos* became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth. i. 1—14.

tians and the Platonists. The former saw in it a new mode of exalting the Messiah;\* and the latter new interest to their philosophy, by connecting it so closely with the most active sect of the venerable religion of Judaism, the professors of which formed already an influential part of their own school.† The junction with Platonism gave to Christianity a new and imposing title to consideration with the Gentiles. The claims of Jesus were no longer those of an obscure Jew, interesting chiefly to his own nation, and proveable only by reference to Jewish writings. They appeared to rest also on the authority of one of the most venerated of the Grecian sages, and might be supported by the writings of an extensive and fashionable philosophic school. To the Jews he had seemed to fulfil the law and the prophets; and

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\* The first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews contains a doctrine so closely resembling that of John's Gospel,—that Jesus was the *logos* or image of God,—that the two writings would seem to proceed from nearly the same age. There is no satisfactory evidence of the date or authorship of the epistle, which appears to be first quoted by Clement of Rome, A. D. 96, who has several passages nearly in the words of Heb. i. 3—13. The application of some of the attributes of the Platonic *logos* to Christ, begins to appear as early as in the writings of Paul (Col. i. 12—18), for he calls him the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: but the incarnation of the *logos* itself first appears clearly in the Gospel of John. The minds of most of the Jews were more or less imbued with the notions of the Alexandrian School, especially the Essenes, of whom the contemplative portion, or Therapeutæ, resided chiefly in Egypt.

† The spiteful manner of Tacitus in mentioning the Jews, (*gens teterima, despectissima*,) and his ready adoption of calumnies upon them, (*Annals*, book ii. chap. 3, 4, 5,) even such an absurd one as the placing of an ass in the holy of holies, should rather lead us to think that he had some peculiar motive for enmity towards them, than that he fairly represents the opinion of the heathens in general towards the Jews. Josephus shows (*Antiq.* xiv. chap. x.) the estimation in which the Jews were held by the Romans as well as the Greeks before the last Jewish war. Their pertinacious resistance during that war, and the continual trouble which they afterwards gave to the Romans, in order to keep them in subjection, may perhaps account for the bitterness of Tacitus. The Christians, as a Jewish sect, obtained a share of his invectives; “*per flagitia invisos . . . . Sontes, et novissima exempla meritos.*”

now to the Greeks he appeared to complete the scheme of Plato.

Platonism was that system of heathen philosophy which had most points of agreement with the Judaism of the Pharisaic and Essene schools. It taught the doctrines of one supreme and invisible Deity, his perfect goodness, and the immortality of man. But these doctrines being in the form of abstract and hardly intelligible speculations, were, with the Platonists, confined to the philosophic schools. The followers of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, connected them with the interests and transactions of life, and with expectations of momentous political importance. Platonism still continued to offer attractive speculations to the learned and inquisitive; but it was reserved for its more robust and energetic ally, the Judaism of Nazareth, to give to its important truths an influence in the business of the world, to open for them an entrance into the affections, and to obtain for them an empire over the will, of the multitudes.

Thus have we followed the Essene Judaism, from the infusion into it of Galilean notions, from its connexion with the doctrine of the Jewish Messiah, its amplification by the adherence and protection of the Pharisees, its extension into the Gentile world, by the relaxation of the Mosaic code, to its junction with the Platonism of the Greeks; and such was Christianity left at the close of the first century, or about the date of the termination of the writings of the New Testament. By this time, Jesus of Nazareth had advanced from the characters of the carpenter's son, the prophet of Galilee, the king of Israel, the Judge of mankind, to be the Logos, or incarnate representation of the Deity; and shortly afterwards the gradation was completed by identifying him with God himself.

By its doctrines concerning God and a future state; by

its social institutions for religious worship and the free communication of charity; by its connexion with the story of Jesus, and its claims to fulfil the prophecies concerning the Jewish Messiah; by its asserted miracles; and by its announcement of the end of the world, and of an approaching Kingdom of Heaven; Christianity possessed too powerful means of influence over the intellect, the affections, and the imagination of men, to be successfully opposed by the magistrate. The violent temporary persecutions which their intolerance of the heathen deities, and their apparently seditious doctrine of the subversion of all existing political states, brought upon the early Christians, merely fanned instead of extinguishing the flame of proselytism,\* and gave to them as martyrs another title to the sympathies of the generous and humane part of mankind. Neither polytheism nor any of the philosophies prevalent in the Roman empire possessed vitality enough to resist the powerful influences which thus rolled onward from Palestine; and after three centuries of alternate persecution and repose, a politic emperor found it expedient to offer to the reforming sect an alliance with the state.

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\* The attempt of Gibbon, in his 16th chapter, to conceal the sufferings of the early Christians is as contradictory to history as it is ungenerous. The persecution under Marcus Antonius, which included the atrocious cruelties at Vienne and Lyons, is thus glossed over: "During the whole course of his reign, Marcus despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign." A parasite of the Emperor could not have written in a more courtly manner. But it must be allowed that there were between the persecutions long intervals, in which the Christians lived and practised their rites with tolerable security.



## CHAPTER III.

ON THE DATE AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL OF  
ST. MATTHEW.

THE four Gospels contain many things agreeing with the usual order of nature, and necessary to account for the growth of Christianity, such as the existence, public preaching, and death of Christ; but they also contain many things unusual in the order of nature, and, as the preceding sketch has shown, not necessary to account for the growth of Christianity, such as Christ's miracles and resurrection. Admitting that a miracle may be proved by sufficient testimony, we are forced also to admit that testimony, in order to be sufficient in this case, must be considerably stronger than that upon which we should believe ordinary facts. Paley agrees that Hume states the case of miracles fairly, when he says that it is the question whether it be more improbable that the miracle should be true, or the testimony false. *Evid.* vol. i. p. 11.

Paley, however, labours to prove that we ought to admit an antecedent probability in favour of a miraculous revelation, from our knowledge of the existence, disposition, and constant agency of the Deity. Others, with Rousseau, have argued that it is antecedently improbable that the Deity should choose to reveal himself by signs of such doubtful and difficult verification as miracles. Most of those who approach the evangelical histories are probably influenced by considerations of one or the other sort; and on the antecedent bias it will depend whether the degree of credibility which can be established for the evangelists appear sufficient to attest even their

miraculous narratives. Hence the different conclusions arrived at by those who apply to the study of the Christian evidences. In either case there seems to be a departure from the strict inductive method, which should lead us to inquire, not what the Deity would or ought to have done, but what he actually has done. It seems beyond the power of the human intellect to decide, *à priori*, whether a miraculous revelation, or instruction through nature alone, be more suitable to the character of God ; but mere common sense, accompanied by industry, patience, and candour, is able to form an opinion as to the weight due to the historical evidence alleged in favour of the supposed miraculous revelation. Critical and historical research, therefore, appears to be the only means of arriving at a sound conclusion.

Let us, then, collect the best evidence we can as to the evangelists' veracity and knowledge of the things which they relate, in order to judge if it be so strong as to warrant a reasonable man in believing them when they relate miracles ; or, in other words, if, considering the circumstances in which they were placed, and what we can perceive of their views, motives, and characters, it be more improbable that the miracles should be true, or their testimony false.

The first Gospel bears no author's name in itself, but has come down to us from the earliest ages of the church under the title of "the Gospel according to St. Matthew." Neither does it bear in itself any date. We are obliged, then, to supply these omissions by inferences from the contents of the book itself, and by external evidence.

I. The contents of the book show that it was published during or immediately after the Jewish war, A. D. 66 to 70 ; for the 24th chapter, written in the prophetic style, mentions things which agree with real events up to that time, but disagree with them afterwards. This is shown by the following

examination of the chapter as compared with the histories of Josephus and others; besides which there are some internal indications that it was not a prediction really delivered by Jesus, but the writer's own description of his times.

Matt. xxiv. 1. *And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and the disciples came to show him the buildings of the temple.* 2. *And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.*

This prediction is not referred to in the speeches of the Apostles in the Acts,\* nor in any of the epistles, although those of Paul dwell frequently upon the state and prospects of the Jewish nation.

3. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

Since the writer says the prediction was delivered privately, the general testimony of the church must have been wanting to support it. He does not say from which of the disciples he himself obtained his information. Mark says, the disciples to whom it was delivered were Peter, James, John, and Andrew; but we cannot find that any of these mentioned it themselves, although epistles are remaining from three of them, of which one was written shortly before the events referred to.† The coming of Jesus, and the end of the world, were generally expected by the Christians about the time of the siege of Jerusalem; but in the lifetime of Jesus the first phrase would have little meaning, for Jesus was already

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\* Stephen was accused of having said that "Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered." Acts vi. 14. But it does not appear that he referred to any prediction of Jesus himself.

† 1 Peter, about A. D. 64.

with them ; and the disciples then expected, not the end of the world, but the restoration of the throne of Israel.\*

\* The disciples probably expected that the redemption of Israel by the Messiah would be accompanied by the destruction of those who refused to repent, and to receive him (Matt. iii. 7, 12 ; vii. 13). They might partake of the common Jewish notion that the Messiah's kingdom was the beginning of a new world or order of things (Matt. xii. 32) ; perhaps also, that it was to be attained through much peril and distress of Israel (Dan. xii. 1). But they had not had sufficient ground given them to consider that the Messiah's kingdom was to be introduced by a *second coming* of Jesus, coincident with the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Their intuitive connexion of all these things together in this scene betokens not only a very ready apprehension of what Jesus is reported to have already said, but some perception of what he was about to say. Matt. xiii. 39, 40, if historical, could at most only lead the hearers to expect an end of the world, in which the Son of Man would reward the righteous and punish the wicked, without connecting this end with a second coming of Jesus, and the fall of Jerusalem. The reader of Matthew, on coming to this verse, is taken by surprise at finding the simultaneousness or connexion of these three things treated as a matter of course by the disciples. The subsequent conduct and language of some of them betoken that there still remained among them the expectation that the Jesus who was already with them, would, during his actual stay on the earth, redeem Israel.

But the matter becomes clear by referring to the ideas of a later period. After the death of Jesus, the Christians believed that he would come again from heaven, which second coming might be called emphatically the coming of the Son of Man, of the Lord, or of Jesus. James v. 7 ; 1 Peter i. 7, 13 ; iv. 13 ; v. 1 ; 2 Peter iii. 12. Josephus shows that the destruction of the city was anticipated some time before it occurred, and that prognostics of it were found in the prophets. Passages in these apparently connected the punishment of Jerusalem with the end of all things. (See page 80.) Therefore by the time the first gospel was written, the Christians had become familiar with the idea of connexion between the coming of the Son of Man, the fall of Jerusalem, and the end of the world ; although they could not foresee the precise order of date of the three events. The writer therefore puts into the mouth of the disciples the question most interesting to the Christians in his own time—"When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming?" &c.

These observations apply also in great part to Matt. x. 22, 23 ; xvi. 28. It seems improbable that the coming of the Son of Man, which appears to have been very commonly used by Jesus to signify his actual appearance, could have been mentioned at the periods referred to as a familiar idea in the sense of a second supernatural coming at a distant period, and apparently without exciting any demand for explanation. Matt. xxvi. 64, occurring shortly before the execution of Jesus, is possibly in substance a real saying,



4. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.* 5. *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.*

Jos., War, book ii. ch. 13, "There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, who laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretence of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty." This was in the procuratorship of Felix, A. D. 55. Ibid. "Now when these (the Egyptian false prophet and his company) were quieted, it happened, as it does in a diseased body, that another part was subject to an inflammation; for a company of deceivers and robbers got together, and persuaded the Jews to revolt, and exhorted them to assert their liberty, inflicting death on those that continued in obedience to the Roman government, and saying, that such as willingly chose slavery ought to be forced from such their desired inclinations; for they parted themselves into different bodies, and lay in wait up and down the country, and plundered the houses of the great men, and slew the men themselves, and set the villages on fire; and this till all Judea was filled with the effects of their madness. And thus the flame was every day more and more blown up, till it came to a direct war."

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being the application of Dan. vii. 13, in a literal sense, when it had not been accomplished in any other; which saying may have contributed to the subsequent expectation of the church, and to its condensation into the phrase, the "coming of the Son of Man." This might easily be reflected into the account of the previous discourses. A few isolated passages of this kind appear therefore rather to partake of the character which internal evidence and the context affix to ch. xxiv. 3, than to afford a sufficient basis on which to establish the authenticity of the latter.

6. *And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars : see that ye be not troubled : for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

Jos., War, ii. ch. 16, "However, Florus contrived another way to oblige the Jews to begin the war, and sent to Cestius, and accused the Jews falsely of revolting." Then followed many massacres and tumults in different parts of Judea, in Syria, and at Alexandria; but the people were restrained by Agrippa from an open war. Chap. 17, "And thus did Agrippa then put a stop to the war which was threatened." After this, Cestius marched to Jerusalem, 30th Oct. A. D. 66, and was beaten; which was the beginning of the war: but Jerusalem itself was not besieged till three years and a half afterwards.

7. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places.* 8. *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

Jos., War, iv. ch. 8, "In the meantime (about March A. D. 68) an account came that there were commotions in Galatia, and that Vindex, with the men of power in that country, had revolted from Nero. This report excited Vespasian to go on briskly with the war; for he foresaw already the civil wars which were coming upon them, nay, that the very government was in danger; and he thought, if he could first reduce the eastern parts of the empire to peace, he should make the fears for Italy the lighter."

Tacitus, Ann. xvi. cap. 13, "This year (A. D. 65 or 67), so disgraced by crimes, was also marked by the gods with tempests and pestilences. Campania was ravaged by a hurricane, which destroyed villas, woods, and harvests; and extended its violence as far as the city, in which the pestilence was thinning all living creatures, &c." According to

Eusebius, three cities, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, suffered much from an earthquake in the reign of Nero; and Lardner has collected several accounts of earthquakes in the same reign. *Jewish Test.* chap. iii.

Jos., War, iv. ch. 9, "Now, as Vespasian was getting ready to march to Jerusalem, he was informed that Nero was dead [A.D. 68, 10th June]. But how he abused his power, how also the war in Galatia was ended; and how Galba was made emperor, and returned out of Spain to Rome, and how he was slain by treachery, and Otho made emperor, with his expedition against the commanders of Vitellius, and his destruction thereupon; and besides what troubles there were under Vitellius; I have omitted to give an account of them, because they are well known by all."

Ch. 10, "Now about this very time (third year of the war) it was that heavy calamities came upon Rome on all sides."

Book v. ch. 1. In describing the three factions which raged at Jerusalem, and the burning of the corn laid up for the siege, Josephus breaks into this exclamation: "and now, O most wretched city, what misery so great as this didst thou suffer from the Romans, when they came to purify thee from thy intestine hatred! For thou couldst be no longer a place fit for God, nor couldst thou longer continue in being, after thou hadst been a sepulchre for the bodies of thine own people, and hadst made the holy house itself a burying-place in this civil war of thine!"

Ibid., "And now as the city was engaged in a war on all sides, from these treacherous crowds of wicked men, the people of the city, between them, were like a great body torn in pieces. The aged men and the women were in such distress by their internal calamities, that they wished for the Romans, and earnestly hoped for an external war, in order to deliver them from their domestic miseries. Nor could such as had a mind flee away, for the robbers, although con-

tending with one another in other respects, agreed in killing those who were for peace with the Romans, or showed an inclination to desert. Nor was any regard paid to those that were still alive, by their relations; nor was any care taken of burial for those that were dead: every one despaired of himself. But the seditious themselves fought against each other, whilst treading upon the dead bodies as they lay heaped together: and when they had resolved upon anything, they executed it without mercy, omitting no method of torment or barbarity." More minute details of the cruelties of the seditious, and of the miseries of the famine, are given in chap. 10.

9. *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

The first persecution of the Christians by the Roman government, that of Nero, began A. D. 64 or 65.\* Tacitus calls them a people abhorred for their crimes.

10. *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.* 11. *And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.*

Jos., War, vi. ch. 5, "A false prophet was the occasion of these people's destruction, who had publicly proclaimed, that God commanded them to get up upon the temple, and that there they should receive miraculous signs of their deliver-

\* Luke is more particular concerning the date of the persecutions, and says it was *before* the wars, earthquakes, &c., xxi. 12; which agrees exactly with Tacitus and Josephus. The order of events may be recapitulated thus:—

A. D. 64 or 65. Persecution under Nero began. There had been minor persecutions previously.

A. D. 65 or 67. Tempests, pestilences, and famines.  
Earthquakes in the reign of Nero [A. D. 54—68], but not dated exactly.

A. D. 68. Civil wars in the empire.

The *προ δε τούτων* of Luke therefore corrects very accurately the *τοτε* of Matthew.



ance. Now, there was then a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose upon the people, who denounced this to them, that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting. Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretel their future desolation." The first incident occurred at the end of the siege; but Josephus evidently passes on to a reflection on the state of things during and previous to it.

12. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

War, v. ch. 11, "Neither did any city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world."

13. *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* 14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

The churches planted by Paul up to the year 62 had increased, and Christianity spread widely into the Roman empire.

15. *When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand).*

This seems to apply to the temporary entrance of Cestius's army into Jerusalem [30th Oct. A. D. 66] and his attack upon the temple. The writer adapts the latter part of Daniel, ch. ix., to the events of his time, and imitates towards his readers the address of the angel, who told Daniel that he was come to give him understanding. The phrase seems merely

to imply a covert meaning, which might be understood with attention. The slight ambiguity rendered the warning more solemn; and besides, as the Christians at Pella did not wish to identify themselves with the revolted Jews, it would have been injudicious to say openly that the "abomination of desolation" meant the Romans.\*

In the time of Pilate, Judea was tolerably tranquil; there was then no reason to apprehend an approaching ruin of Jerusalem. But after the defeat of Cestius, Josephus says that ruin was generally apprehended, and that oracles of it were found in the prophets, alluding apparently to Daniel. War, iv. 6, 3.

16. *Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains.*  
 17. *Let him who is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house.* 18. *Neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

War, ii. 20, "After the defeat of Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship about to sink." Eusebius and Epiphanius say, that before the war began (which might mean before the entrance of Vespasian's army into Galilee) the Christians left Jerusalem and went to Pella.

19. *And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.* 20. *But pray ye that your flight be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath.* 21. *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be.* 22. *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.*

The term "elect" is common in the epistles; but in the

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\* The courtesy of Josephus towards the Romans doubtless led him to interpret the βδελυγμα της ερημωσεως as the pollution of the temple by the seditious. War, iv. 6, 3.

time of Jesus, his followers seem to have been usually called the disciples, and, afterwards, the brethren.\*

23. *Then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.* 24. *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.* 25. *Behold, I have told you before.* 26. *Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.* 27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.* 28. *For, wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

So far the prophecy corresponds minutely with history.

29. *Immediately (εὐθὺς) after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.* 30. *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* 31. *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of the trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* 32. *Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.* 33. *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.* 34. *Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.*

These things did not happen.† The rest of the chapter,

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\* Excepting in this chapter of Matthew, and the corresponding one in Mark, Cruden quotes only one instance of the use of the term in the Gospels. Luke xviii. 7.

† The frequent allusions in the Epistles to the approaching end of all

and the following one, go on to describe the coming of the Son of Man, but contain nothing corresponding with real events.

Since, therefore, the writer was acquainted with real events till nearly the end of the Jewish war, but ignorant of them afterwards, it follows that he wrote between the years A. D. 66 and 70. The Christians who took refuge at Pella probably addressed many exhortations to their brethren to escape from the city, and to avoid following the impostors; and in the loose state of Christ's history at that time, it was easy to amplify some traditionary sayings of his into directions for the crisis at hand. The author of Matthew, writing about that time, naturally introduced such a prominent topic of the day into his work; and being, as is seen from other parts of it, less studious of historical accuracy than of rendering it interesting and impressive, gave to his description the favourite and poetical form of prophecy. The greater part is well adapted to the period between the defeat of Cestius, A. D. 66, and the arrival of the Romans around the city, 14th April A. D. 70; for until then, escape, although opposed by the tyrants, was still possible, and the miseries of the city were growing daily more intolerable. The most probable date seems to be 68 or 69, because, with the exception of the allusion to the destruction of the temple, the writer does not show any acquaintance with the events accompanying the final capture of the city, which he was most likely to do if he knew them, after dwelling so minutely on the previous occurrences; as is seen in the account of Luke. The allusion to the temple was not unlikely to be made about the year 68, since Josephus says, that most anticipated the entire destruc-

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things confirm the first impression of the reader, that the writer intended the prediction to be understood in its literal and obvious sense. That it refers figuratively to the spread of the Gospel is a later explanation.



tion of the city. Nevertheless, there appears to be no very weighty reason against placing the date as late as A. D. 70, cotemporary with or immediately after the capture of the city; for although the exhortations to flight could then be of no practical use, the record of them helped to describe, in an impressive manner, the feelings of the Christians during the terrible crisis through which they had just passed.

Zacharias, the son of Baruch, was murdered about the year 68. The arguments given in note \*, p. 81, to prove that he was the same as the Zacharias, son of Barachias, alluded to Matt. xxiii. 35, tend to confirm the date of 68, or later, for this Gospel.

Since these two chapters, xxiii. and xxiv., have always formed part of the Gospel of Matthew, the whole compilation must be dated about 68.

II. Let us see what can be collected from external testimony concerning the date.

Barnabas, in an epistle written apparently soon after the fall of Jerusalem, A. D. 71 or 72, has this passage: "Let us therefore beware, lest it should happen to us as it is written, There are many called, few chosen." These words are in Matt. xx. 16, and xxii. 14. And there are many other passages in Barnabas, agreeing almost literally with some in Matthew, although they are not said to be quotations.

Clement of Rome, A. D. 96, says, "For thus he (Jesus) said, Be ye merciful that ye may obtain mercy... with what measure ye mete, with the same it shall be measured to you:" which agrees with Matt. vii. 2.

A. D. 116. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, is the first who mentions Matthew's work by name. His writings are lost, but Eusebius says that they contained the following:—"Matthew wrote the divine oracles in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able." *Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἑβραϊδὶ*

διαλεκτω τα λογια συνεγραψατο. Ἡρμηνευσε δ' αὐτα ὡς ηδυνато εκαστος. Eusebius in one place calls Papias an “eloquent man, and skilful in the Scriptures;” in another, “a man of no great capacity.”

A. D. 178. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, makes the first clear mention of all the four Gospels, and says of Matthew’s, “Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding (or establishing) a church there.” The deaths of Peter and Paul are dated variously from A. D. 64 to 68.\* According to Jerome and Bede, they happened in the last year of Nero, or A. D. 68. They had been preaching at Rome together for several years before.

A. D. 230. Origen says that, according to the tradition received by him, the first gospel was written by Matthew, once a publican, afterwards a disciple of Jesus Christ; who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in the Hebrew tongue.

A. D. 368. Epiphanius. “Matthew wrote in Hebrew;” and “Matthew wrote first, and Mark soon (*εὐθὺς*) after him, being a follower of Peter at Rome.” Now Mark wrote soon after Peter’s death; so that if we take the date of this according to Jerome, Matthew must have written about the year 68.

A. D. 394. Theodore of Mopsuestia. “For a good while the Apostles preached chiefly to Jews in Judea. Afterwards Providence made way for conducting them to remote countries. Peter went to Rome [A. D. 63 or 64], the rest elsewhere; John in particular took up his abode at Ephesus.

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\* Lardner is in favour of the year 65; but the arguments for so early a date appear to be of little weight. (Hist. of Apostles, ch. xi.) Jerome says, without any appearance of doubt, that Peter was put to death in the last year of Nero, i. e. A. D. 68. De V. I. cap. i.

About this time, the other evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, published their gospels, which were soon spread all over the world."

A. D. 392. Jerome. "The first evangelist is Matthew, the publican, surnamed Levi, who wrote his Gospel in Judea, in the Hebrew language, chiefly for the sake of the Jews that believed in Jesus."

A. D. 398. Chrysostom. "Matthew is said to have written his Gospel at the request of the Jewish believers, who desired him to put down in writing what he had taught them by word of mouth; and he is said to have written in Hebrew;" and afterwards, "In what place each one of the evangelists wrote, cannot be said with certainty.\*

These are the earliest testimonies concerning Matthew's Gospel; and they confirm the internal evidence of its having been written about A. D. 68, i. e. about 35 years after the events which it professes to record. During that interval, much of the true history of Christ was doubtless preserved; but it seems also highly probable, that some misrepresentations and fictions should have been mingled with it.

III. In order, then, to receive implicitly Matthew's statements, we must be satisfied as to his accuracy and veracity.

The evidence of Matthew *the Apostle's* being the real author is not very strong; because most of the writers quoted may have borrowed from Papias; but if it were so, we know so little of that apostle,† that a work of his cannot be exempt from scrutiny.

\* It was only after the time of Chrysostom that some writers began to attribute an earlier date to Matthew. (Lardner, Hist. of Apost. ch. v.) Lardner concludes that Matthew's Gospel was written *not before* 63 or 64. But he assumes that "the predictions must have been recorded before they were accomplished." Sect. 3.

† In addition to the account in the New Testament, Lardner could find only a few uncertain traditions. Hist. of Apost. ch. v.

Eusebius said (H. E. 3, 24.) that from Palestine Matthew turned εφ' ερεπου

He (or the person bearing his name) quotes from the Old Testament, as prophecies relating to Jesus, texts which, when examined, are found to have nothing to do with Jesus. For instance, ch. ii. 15, "And he (Jesus) was there (in Egypt), that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." The passage in Hosea is, "When *Israel* was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," ch. xi. 1. Some he quotes incorrectly, as ch. ii. 6, compared with Micah v. 2.\* One passage which he quotes as a prophecy,† ii. 23, is not found in the Old Testament; although there is one in Judges, xiii. 5, resembling it in sound only. See also ch. ii. 17, and iv. 14.

The misquotation or misapplication of the prophecies might possibly be regarded merely as a proof of negligence or erroneous judgment, into which the writer of the first gospel was led by the fanciful and inaccurate method of interpretation so prevalent in the Jewish schools; but the converse, viz. the perversion of facts, in order to fit them to the prophecies, indicates historical dishonesty.

In Zechariah ix. 9, is this passage: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold

to other people. Origen had no knowledge of the people to whom Matthew had preached (Euseb. H. E. 3, 1.), nor Jerome (Catal. Vir. Ill. 3). Heracleon (about 150) quoted by Clement Alex. supposed that Matthew died a natural death. Later writers named various countries as the scene of his labours; most of them Æthiopia.

\* Jerome says concerning this quotation, that Matthew agrees neither with the Septuagint nor the Hebrew text, either in words or sense. "Quanta sit inter Matthæum et Septuaginta, verborum ordinisque discordia, sic magis admiraberis, si Hebraicum videas—sensusque contrarius est, Septuaginta sibi hoc in loco et Hebraico concordante." Hieron de opt. gen. interp. t. iv. par. 2.

† "This text (he shall be called a Nazarene) is entirely wanting in all our copies, Hebrew and Greek."—Whiston's Essay on O. T., p. 104. Lit. accomp. p. 4.



thy king cometh unto thee ; he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding *upon an ass, and upon a colt* the foal of an ass."

Matthew relates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem thus, xxi. 1: "Then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find *an ass tied, and a colt with her*: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them (*αυτους*). All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and *brought the ass and the colt*, and put on them (*επανω αυτων*) their clothes, and set him thereon," literally, "on them" (*επεκαθισαν επανω αυτων*).\*

Mark, Luke, and John, mention only one animal, *the colt of an ass*, although Mark appears to have copied the greater part of his account from Matthew.† This does not show such a literal fulfilment of the prophecy, but is more probable in itself. The testimony, therefore, of the other three evangelists, and the probability of the thing itself, lead us to conclude, that Matthew has falsified in his account, in order to make it appear that the prophecy, according to his version of it, was exactly fulfilled.

\* Augustine explained the matter by saying, he rode first one, and then the other. Campbell's translation is, "They made him ride." Improved Version, "And he sat thereon." Rosenmüller compares this passage to Jud. xii. 7, "Jephtha was buried in the cities of Gilead," i. e. one of them.

† Matt. Και οτε ηγγισαν εις Ιεροσολυμα . . . ηγαγον την ονον και τον πωλον, και επεθηκαν επανω αυτων τα ιματια αυτων, και επεκαθισαν επανω αυτων.

Mark xi. 1, 7. Και οτε εγγιζουσιν εις Ιερουσαλημ . . . και ηγαγον τον πωλον προς τον Ιησουν, και επεβαλον αυτω τα ιματια αυτων και εκαθισεν επ' αυτω.

In Psalm lxi. 21, we find, "They gave me also *gall* for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me *vinegar* to drink." Matthew says that, previously to the crucifixion, they gave Jesus "*vinegar to drink mingled with gall*," (οξος μετα χολης μεμιγμενον) xxvii. 34. But Mark calls the drink "*wine mingled with myrrh*," εσμυρνισμενον οινον. John says nothing of this first offering of drink, but agrees with Matthew and Mark in mentioning another, of the sponge filled with vinegar immediately before the death of Jesus. Luke says only in a vague manner, "and the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar," xxiii. 36; which may refer to the second offering. Matthew therefore disagrees with Mark, and is not confirmed by the others, as to the precise kind of drink offered before the crucifixion; but he makes his account correspond exactly with the Psalm.\*

Matthew says that Judas received *thirty pieces of silver* for betraying Jesus, and afterwards brought them again to the priests, *who bought with them the potter's field*. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,† saying, And they took *the thirty pieces of silver*, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, *and gave them for the potter's field*, as the Lord appointed me." Mark, Luke, and John, merely state that Judas received money, without mentioning thirty pieces; and say nothing about a potter's field. But Luke, in the Acts,

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\* This subject is considered more minutely in chap. xii., note on John xix. 28.

† In our copies the passage is in Zechariah xi. 12, 13, but rather different from Matthew's quotation. The resemblance of the last five chapters of Zechariah to Jeremiah in style and subject, and the unsuitableness of some parts to the time of the former, (see ch. x. 10, 11,) would lead us to think that Matthew was here correct as to the name of the book, and that those chapters were originally part of Jeremiah. Jerome said he had seen the text concerning the potter's field in an apocryphal book of Jeremiah. In Matt. xvii. t. iv. p. 134.

says, Judas himself bought a field. Matthew, then, differs materially from the others, the differences being such as make his account agree well with what he quotes as a prophecy.

Since Matthew appears anxious throughout his work to exhibit the fulfilment of prophecy by Jesus, it seems very clear that his zeal led him, in these instances, to tamper with the facts. Other objects, then, might lead him to do the same in other places. Allowance must be made for many inaccuracies in every history; but a few instances only of wilful perversion are enough to bring a writer into discredit.

In the genealogy of Christ, he says that each of the epochs from Abraham to David, from David to the captivity, and from the captivity to Christ, consisted of fourteen generations each. The last series contains only thirteen, unless Jeconiah, who ends the second, be counted again. This might be an oversight: but in the second, he omits four kings or generations—Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, and, further on, Jehoiakim, which makes his number exact.\* It is difficult to consider this also as a mere oversight. Yet, since the name of Ahaziah or Ochozias is very much like that of his great grandson Uzziah or Ozias, the excuse might be admitted on behalf of an historian of known scrupulousness.

Thus much must lead the reader to hesitate in ascribing to this gospel the character of a faithful narration of facts; and the impression is confirmed by meeting with numerous stories, which, from external and internal evidence, bear the strongest marks of fiction.

Matthew says that "Herod slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years

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\* Some of the Fathers explained that these kings were omitted on account of their wickedness; but certainly Manasseh and Amon, who are inserted, were as bad as any of the four.

old and under," ii. 16 ; which is not mentioned by the other three evangelists, nor by Josephus, although the latter is very minute in detailing the barbarities of Herod. The conduct attributed to Herod is in itself absurd ; he makes no search after the one dangerous child, to whom the visit of the wise men must have afforded a good clue, but slays the children of a whole town and the adjoining country in a mass. It is inconceivable that any fit of anger could lead a politic old king, however tyrannical, to indulge in such useless and costly cruelty. And how could Josephus, who has filled thirty-seven chapters with the history of Herod, omit all allusion to such a wholesale murder ? Lardner supposes that Josephus wilfully suppressed this ; which is rather hard upon Josephus, since Mark, Luke, John, and all other historians, are as silent as he is.

The whole account of the birth of Jesus is such, that if found by itself, it would be considered as a wild eastern tale, or an imitation of some similar fables relating to the births of preceding heroes, philosophers, and divinities.

The conversation and adventures of Jesus with the Enemy of mankind could be cited by few persons in modern times except as a poetical vision. Yet Matthew introduces them in the midst of things intended as facts, and as much in the style of facts as any part of his narrative.

In the account of the crucifixion, he gives these miraculous incidents (in addition to the darkness and the rending of the veil of the temple, which are found in the others), viz. an earthquake, a rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, and the resurrection of many bodies of saints. None of these things, which one would think must have attracted some attention on the part of other Christians besides the individual compiler of this gospel, are mentioned by his fellow-evangelists whilst relating the connected circumstances ; nor are they



alluded to in the Acts and Epistles ; an absence of testimony less remarkable, it is true, than in the former case. Without prejudging the question of the possibility of miracle, it cannot be denied that facts of this kind do require for their support, evidence stronger than the solitary and apparently careless assertion of an unknown writer ; one at least of whose character we have very little means of judging, beyond what can be gathered from the very writing which contains them.

He alone also relates the dream of Pilate's wife, on account of which she warns the procurator to have nothing to do with Jesus, this being the sixth instance in this gospel of this mode of divine communication. The story bears improbability on its face. If the supernatural dream were intended to be an effective warning, it would most likely have been directed to Pilate himself, since it is allowed that he neglected the vision of his wife. If, on the other hand, it be considered as not really intended to avert the death of Jesus, but merely to serve as a testimony to his righteousness, the improbability arises, that the divine testimony could be given in the form of a feeble and inefficient attempt to save him.

Some additional light will be thrown on Matthew's veracity when we come to examine Mark.

IV. A great part of this gospel is made up of acts and sayings of Jesus in that short fragmentary form into which it is natural to suppose they must have fallen in the lapse of 35 years ; and in many instances it seems probable that the writer gives the version faithfully, or very nearly so, as it was presented to him by the most prevalent tradition of his church or time, or by some previous document ; because in such cases, the anecdote stops short at the saying of Jesus, the performance of the miracle, or some other remarkable point, without relating what followed, or otherwise connecting itself necessarily with the thread of the narrative. For instance :

The calling of the first four disciples (ii. 18—22) is a short tale complete in itself, ending at the most interesting point, viz. that James and John forsook all, and followed Jesus. The narrative both before and after is in a much less graphic style. This is exactly the form which such a remarkable fragment of the history of Jesus might have assumed in tradition, which drops all excepting a few striking points or nuclei of interest.

Chapters viii. and ix. consist almost entirely of detached anecdotes of this kind, merely connected with such phrases as “and,” “then,” “and it came to pass,” “and as he departed,” &c., apparently more for the sake of keeping up the form of continuous narrative, than from a regard to real historical succession. See also ch. xii. xiii.

The anecdote of the Scribe who wished to follow Jesus, ends at the saying “the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” Either an eye-witness or an inventor would probably have added whether the Scribe did or did not follow Jesus. In like manner we have the remarkable answer of Jesus to another disciple, “Let the dead bury their dead,” without being told what was done by the disciple. viii. 18—22. The multitudes who were faint, ix. 36, are evidently introduced for the sake of the saying which follows, since nothing more is said of them. The anecdote of the dining with publicans and sinners ends at the reproof of Jesus, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;” although we cannot but suppose that there was more conversation, and that the scene must have furnished to an eye-witness further materials for description. ix. 10—13.

But whilst many of these fragments have the appearance of being delivered to us faithfully, without any material addition beyond an insignificant connecting particle or phrase, there are, in many other cases, strong indications that the writer

allowed himself to embellish or piece out the meagre record of a scene or discourse from his own imagination. The interest which he takes in his narrative urges him frequently beyond the narrow limits of known historical truth. In the scene at Gethsemane, he not only relates facts which might have reached him, but gives in an equally earnest and pathetic manner the prayers and movements of Jesus, whilst his only companions, Peter, James and John, were asleep. xxvi. 36—45. In mentioning that Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus (xiv. 1), he puts into his mouth a speech very consistent with the ideas of the Christians, but not at all congruous to the supposed speaker; for the hasty conclusion that Jesus must be “John the Baptist risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him,” and especially the proclamation of such a fear, betoken a terror-stricken conscience approaching to insanity, for which there is not sufficient support in all that remains concerning Herod Antipas.\* Moreover, in the account of John the Baptist, the warning given by him to the tetrarch on a matter of the most private nature, the motives of Herod, the agreement between Herodias and her daughter, were circumstances not likely to be known so accurately by one of the lower ranks in Judea, where the people had very little means of learning the secrets of courts; and in fact, the whole account differs essentially from that given by Josephus, who from his rank and intimate acquaintance with the politics and leading men of Judea, must have had incomparably better means of knowing the truth, than either a cotemporary tax-gatherer, or a member of the Christian sect 35 years later.†

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\* *Ant.* xviii. ch. 2—7. He was a prince of a suspicious temper, but apparently not deficient in understanding and talent; and, as Josephus says, he put John to death deliberately from political motives.

† Even if Matthew's story could be traced to Joanna the wife of Chuza,

This appearance of embellishment, or continuance of the subject beyond the authentic materials handed down, shows itself more frequently in the discourses and parables. The inspection of the temple by Jesus and his disciples (xxiv.) might very well be real; possibly also the saying of Jesus concerning its future destruction, which is certainly much in the style of other brief fragmentary sayings apparently genuine; besides which, the reflection that, owing to the rejection of the Messiah, the second temple would share the fate of the first,—was not incongruous to the point of the history in question. The amplification of this into an account of the last Jewish war has been noticed. The charge to the apostles, x. 5, bears strong marks of reality up to ver. 15 or 16; but here, as if warmed with the subject, the writer makes Jesus dilate into a forcible and eloquent oration adapted to the ideas and necessities of the writer's own time. The testimony against the Gentiles, the salvation of him that endureth to the end, and the promise that "they should not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come," could hardly have been intelligible to the disciples at the period in question.\* But it is in the highest degree natural that the writer, believing in the prophetic knowledge of Jesus, should intermix with the relics of his directions, what he considered it fitting for him to have said with reference to the crisis at

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this authority could not outweigh Josephus. Yet this channel assists the explanation of the manner in which the story might have been compounded, viz. of the agreed facts of Herod's marriage and John's death, some second-hand tales relating to Herod's court, and the additions of the writer himself.

\* We must not only attribute prophecy to Jesus himself, but a prophetic understanding to the disciples. It might be said, that he spoke prophetically without explanation, leaving it to be interpreted by events about 35 years afterwards, *i. e.* when many, perhaps most, of his hearers would no longer be alive to receive the interpretation. This cannot be admitted when there is another explanation, so ready and simple, of the apparent anachronism.



which the church had arrived. It is to be observed that both Mark and Luke in their account of the charge, stop short at places corresponding to Matthew's verses 14 and 15; *i. e.* before any apparent anachronism occurs.

Among minor instances of the same kind may be placed perhaps the following:

Matt. xi. 12. "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*"

The mode of expression implies that the days of John the Baptist were at a considerable distance from the time at which the thought occurred. It is very applicable to the weighty Roman yoke, the forcible subjection to which seemed to be the chief obstacle to the development of the kingdom announced by John the Baptist; and to the continual violence which Judea suffered both before and during the war; it seems therefore intended to keep up the hopes of the Jewish Christians that the Kingdom of Heaven, though so long deferred, would still be manifested in the chosen land.\*

xviii. 17. "*If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*"

In the lifetime of Jesus, there was no *church* (ἐκκλησία) or organized assembly of his followers. There were then synagogues,† and probably theological schools, or houses of the Rabbins (beth Midrash). But subsequently, the Christians generally adopted the term "the church" to signify their own body, the assembly of the elect (ἐκλεκτοί), and in this

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\* The discourse is not in Mark. Luke, vii. 28, stops exactly before the verse in question; but he inserts it in a detached form in another place. xvi. 16.

† Maimonides mentions several cases in which delinquencies were proclaimed in the *Synagogue*. See Lightfoot in Matt. xviii. 17.

sense exclusively it seems to have been used by the year 68.\*

It is natural that when a writer confines himself to giving relics of real discourses, he should only be able to present us with small fragments; but when he allows himself to speak for his characters, the style should become more eloquent and flowing. This distinction is very observable in Matthew. Those parts, forming perhaps the larger proportion, which appear from historical considerations to give us very nearly real sayings of Jesus, are chiefly in the fragmentary style. See the discourse on the mount, evidently a miscellaneous collection; the sayings and parables during the journeys about Galilee; and the few sayings attributed to Jesus during his trial. But in those parts applicable to the time of the siege, x. 17—33, xxiv. and xxv., the style expands, as if the writer were giving vent to his own thoughts, or at least modifying and amplifying freely his authentic materials.† Although this distinction is not invariable,‡ it must excite attention to find it especially well marked in the passages alluded to.

V. Thus, there is in this gospel the appearance of a mixture of reality and fiction, the former constituting probably the larger proportion of the whole. As it is the earliest record extant, so it seems also to be, with all its imperfections, the best source from which we can obtain a general view of

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\* 1 Peter v. 13. James v. 14. It occurs frequently in nearly all the Epistles, and in the Acts. But nothing shows that such could have been assumed to be the current meaning of the term in the time of Jesus. Cruden gives only two instances of its use in the Gospels, Matt. xviii. 17. xvi. 18.

See note on the word *elect*, p. 105.

† This idea is supported by finding Luke's record of the parable of the ten talents very different from Matthew's, xxv. 14—30, the latter being evidently much more suitable to the later period.

‡ The reproofs of the Pharisees, ch. xxiii. for instance, are in a very continuous form, although presenting for the most part strong appearances of genuineness.

the life of Jesus ; for, notwithstanding some partial dislocations of the order of events, and the probable mis-arrangement of many sayings, from the attempt to group similar ones together, this gospel gives a more clear and connected account of the progress of Jesus from his baptism to his death than any other. Taking this gospel by itself, the chronology and geography of the story present no very great difficulty. The fragments bear a vigour and unity of character, which it would be perhaps impossible to give to a collection of mere brief fictions ; and considering the proximity, in time and place, of its publication to the first circulation of the fragments and traditions, there is good reason to suppose that it preserves many things as they were delivered by the original eye-witness himself, and many more proceeding from him, but with more or less variation. That this eye-witness was the Apostle Matthew, the undisputed title of the book from early times, and the testimony of Papias, confirmed or repeated by other fathers, afford evidence of considerable weight. But that this eye-witness was the compiler of this *whole* gospel, would be very difficult to reconcile with the impression given by reading it. In addition to what has been suggested, the notices of time and place are in general far from being so complete as one would expect from an eye-witness. There are continual chasms in the itinerary of Jesus ; and notwithstanding the apparent endeavour to preserve the connexion of the story by joining the incidents together with such phrases as “ At that time ” — “ And when ” — “ Then ” — “ From that time forth,” &c., there are so many abrupt transitions, that it is difficult to imagine that the writer could have been travelling companion to Jesus for any length of time, as the disciples are represented to have been. For instance, ch. xv. 21, Jesus goes from thence, Gennesaret near the sea of Galilee, to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, a

distance of nearly 50 miles, and back again ; and nothing is told as to the object or incidents of this journey except the affair of the Syrophenician woman. In mentioning the many journeys of Jesus and his followers about the country, an eye-witness could hardly have avoided giving some particulars about the manner in which they were performed, such as the method of journeying, the number of the party, the difficulties from roads and weather, the houses at which they stayed, and the like. Such minutiae, however trifling, are almost inevitably interwoven with the narrations of an eye-witness ; although they soon disappear from the story, when it passes into other hands. In Matthew, they are wanting to such a degree that we cannot even guess whether Jesus performed his numerous land journeys on foot, by mules, or some other mode of conveyance. The difference between the narratives of a travelling companion and those of a second-hand narrator is seen very well by comparing Luke's account of Paul's latter journeys\* with Matthew's indistinct sketches of those of Jesus, viz. "He *departed* from Galilee and *came* into the coasts of Judea," "when Jesus *came* into the coasts of Cesarea, Philippi," &c. The same sort of historical brevity is observable in many of the incidents recorded. Compare, for instance, the cure of the lunatic after the transfiguration with the same story in Mark. Moreover, (if the hypothesis of real miracles be rejected,) both the discourses and incidents are interwoven more closely with fiction than would probably be the case if the writer had been an eye-witness ; for such an one, from the vivid impression left by real scenes, would be likely to leave, at least, long continuous passages clear. Such is the case in the latter part of the Acts, where the stream of consecutive facts pre-

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\* See Acts xxi. 1—6, 8, 15—16; xxiii. 24, 31, 32; xxvii.; xxviii. 10—16, 30.



sent in the writer's mind, leaves him little room to introduce things strictly miraculous.\*

There is another argument of much weight towards proving that Matthew the Apostle was not the author of this entire gospel. Papias says that Matthew wrote his *logia* in *Hebrew*, which every one interpreted (or illustrated) as he was able. The expression *logia*† is by no means equivalent to gospel, but might mean only detached fragmentary sayings; and therefore when the fathers, subsequent to Papias, say that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, they may be only repeating his assertion incorrectly; for it was a very natural inadvertence to confound the original *logia* of which he spoke, with the entire gospel which both comprised and superseded the *logia* in their own time. But no one has left a record of having seen a Hebrew original of our Greek gospel according to Matthew,‡ nor can any trace of a translator

\* In Credner's *Einleitung*, § 47, there is an additional argument of much weight. If the writer had been an apostle, he would have written independently of the church traditions, and if necessary have corrected them; but on the contrary, he seems rather to gather his materials from those traditions, as is strongly evidenced by his frequently giving double versions of the same incident: e. g. cure of the blind man—the feedings—demand of a sign—accusation respecting Beelzebub.

† λογιον. Schrevelius—Oraculum; responsum divinum.

‡ Jerome indeed said that a copy of the Hebrew gospel of Matthew used by the Nazarenes, was kept in the library of Cesarea in his time. *Catal. vir. ill. c. 3*. But in two other places he shows that this Hebrew gospel was not considered identical with the commonly received gospel of Matthew. "The gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which we lately translated from Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by many (plerisque) the authentic one of Matthew."—*Comment. in Matt. xii. 13*. "In the gospel according to the Hebrews, which is written in the Chaldaic and Syriac tongue, but in Hebrew letters, which the Nazarenes use to this day, according to the apostles, or, as many (plerique) maintain, according to Matthew, and which is kept in the library of Cesarea, &c."—*Contra Pelag. 3, 2*. This shows very plainly that Jerome did not find that Hebrew gospel to agree with the common Greek one so far as to establish their identity, for then it would have been superfluous for the Nazarenes and others (plerique) to maintain that it was the authentic one.

and translation be discovered. On the contrary, a large majority of the best commentators since Erasmus, agree that the present Greek gospel bears strong indications of being itself an original,\* and we know that Jews were accustomed to write in Greek, when they intended their writing for circulation.† This then would of itself furnish ground for supposing that Matthew the apostle, if he wrote anything, wrote only certain fragments or logia in Hebrew (*i. e.* probably Syro-Chaldaic), and that some one else after him wrote the Greek gospel which has come down to us, incorporating those logia, whence it was called the gospel *according to* Matthew, and in the second century came to be considered as the work of that apostle.

Upon the whole, then, the most that we can conclude seems to be, that this gospel was the work of some one who became a member of the Jewish church before the war, and who collected the relics of the acts and sayings of Jesus reported by Matthew the apostle, introducing some traditions which he found elsewhere, and filling up copiously from his own invention.‡ His aim was, probably, to do honour to Jesus and the common cause, to strengthen the church under the trying circumstances of the times, and to be the author of a work which should be generally acceptable to his brethren. That such a man should not always adhere to strict truth seems quite consistent with human nature, since in the subsequent times, and in the Christian Church, we find pious men and sincere believers allowing themselves to countenance palpable falsehoods.§

\* A minute review of the arguments on this point is in Credner's *Einleitung*, § 42-46 on Matthew.

† The epistle of James written in Greek, and probably at Jerusalem, one instance.

‡ Further evidence of this will be found in chap. vii. and viii.

§ Irenæus, arguing against the heretics, who only allowed thirty-one

The question of the writer's veracity is the most important one as regards the miraculous origin of Christianity, but

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years to Christ's life, and the last alone to his ministry, affirmed that Christ was fifty years old at least at the time of his death; for which he alleges the unanimous testimony of all the old men who had lived with St. John in Asia, some of whom had also heard the same account from the other apostles. "*Quidam autem eorum non solum Joannem, sed et alios apostolos viderunt, et hæc eadem ab ipsis audierunt, et testantur de hujusmodi relatione.*" L. 2, c. 39. This approaches very nearly to apostolic testimony; yet it is at variance with many important parts of the New Testament history.

The same Father also asserted, that in the church in his time some had been raised from the dead, and lived afterwards several years, "*Jam etiam, quemadmodum diximus et mortui resurrexerunt, et perseveraverunt nobiscum annis multis.*" L. 2, c. 22, 4.

Speaking of the millennium, he says, "The elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, relate that they had heard from him, how that the Lord taught concerning those times, and said, The days will come in which there shall grow vineyards having each 10,000 vine stocks, and each stock 10,000 branches, each branch 10,000 shoots, each shoot 10,000 bunches, each bunch 10,000 grapes; and each grape squeezed shall yield twenty-five measures of wine; and when any of the saints shall go to pluck a bunch, another bunch will cry out, I am better; take me, and bless the Lord through me. In like manner a grain of wheat sown, shall bear 10,000 stalks, each stalk 10,000 grains, and each grain 10,000 pounds of the finest flour; and so all other fruits, seeds and herbs, in the same proportion, &c. These words Papias, a disciple of St. John, and companion of Polycarp, an ancient man, testifies in writing in his fourth book, and adds, that they are credible to those who believe." Iren. l. 2, c. 33.

Irenæus thus gives the credit of this story to Papias, who was said by Eusebius to be a weak man, and of a very shallow understanding. But Papias speaks for himself thus: "As oft as I met with any one who had conversed with the ancients, I always inquired very diligently after their sayings and doctrines; what Andrew, Peter, Philip, John and the rest of the Lord's apostles used to teach. For I was persuaded I could not profit so much by books as by the voice of living witnesses." Euseb. H. E. l. 3, c. 39.

Justin Martyr, speaking of the seventy elders who were shut up in cells without communication with each other, and whose translations of the Scriptures were found to agree verbatim from beginning to end, says, "that he is not telling a fable or forged tale, but that he himself had seen at Alexandria the remains of those very cells in which the translators had been shut up." Cohort. ad Græcos, p. 14.

Tertullian, writing against theatres, says, "An example happened, as the Lord is witness, of a woman who went to the theatre, and came back

whilst occupied chiefly with this, we might be led to form an undeservedly low estimate of his book. This memorable record comes to us as the principal and earliest history extant of the founder of the Christian church, and we find in it merit not altogether incommensurate with the influence which it has exercised. The rude poetry of warm and unrestrained imagination prevails throughout; the zealous Jewish Christian endeavouring to commemorate his master, thinks not of future theologians and critics, but recklessly invests Jesus with all the dignity which fulfilled prophecy, visions, and convulsions of nature, could suggest to an uncultivated reader of the Hebrew legends. The position of the church and of Judea imparts solemnity to his story even in its wildest romance. We seem to distinguish the sword in the sky hanging over Jerusalem in its last days, and the portentous voice of woe which resounded in her streets; we behold the perplexity of the people fearing the things which were coming to pass, and share the anxiety of the band of elect looking for the long-deferred sign of the Son of Man from Heaven. Amidst the tokens of impending ruin to

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with a devil in her; whereupon, when the unclean spirit was urged and threatened for having dared to attack one of the faithful, he replied, I have done nothing but what is very fair, for I found her on my own ground." *De Spectac.* 26. On which Middleton remarks, that although it might be true that terrors of conscience threw the woman into some disorder, we cannot but suspect that the smart answer of the devil was contrived by Tertullian himself, to enforce his doctrine of the sin and danger of frequenting theatres.

Epiphanius said, that, "in imitation of the miracle at Cana in Galilee, several fountains and rivers in his days were annually turned into wine. A fountain of Cibra, a city of Caria," says he, "and another at Gerasa in Arabia, prove the truth of this. I myself have drunk out of the fountain of Cibra, and my brethren out of the other at Gerasa; and many testify the same thing of the river Nile." *Adv. Hær.* l. 2, c. 30.

For more evidence of the credulity and want of veracity of many of the Fathers, see Middleton's *Inquiry concerning the Miraculous Powers of the Early Church.*



Israel, we feel with him the deep interest of every apostolic reminiscence which could lead the Christians to see in themselves a New Israel of the Messiah's saints ; and in contrast with the cruelties of the military factions, and the seductions of the false prophets, we perceive the fascination of every fiction which might confirm their belief in their own leader Jesus as an invisible protector, the true Messiah and Son of God.

## CHAPTER IV.

ON THE DATE AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL OF  
ST. MARK.

JOHN, whose surname was Mark, sometimes called simply Mark (Col. iv. 10), nephew of Barnabas, was an early convert who took a zealous part in the missionary proceedings of the church, and was frequently the companion of Paul. Acts xii. 12, 25; xiii. 5, 13; xv. 37. Col. iv. 10. Philem. 24. The writer of the Gospel was, according to the unanimous testimony of the church, a follower of Peter, and therefore not improbably the person whom Peter calls his son, perhaps in a spiritual sense. 1 Peter v. 13. He wrote his Gospel at Rome. Afterwards, according to Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome, he preached the gospel in Egypt, and was first bishop of the church at Alexandria.

That John Mark, or Mark, nephew of Barnabas, and sometimes follower of Paul, is the same as Mark the disciple of Peter, does not therefore appear certain, but very probable.

His Gospel appears to be quoted by Clemens Romanus, A.D. 96.

The first who names him is Papias, A.D. 116, who says, "And this, the presbyter (John) said: Mark being the interpreter of Peter, wrote exactly whatever he remembered, but not in the order in which things were spoken or done by Christ. For he was neither a hearer nor follower of the Lord; but, as I said, afterwards followed Peter, who made his discourses for the profit of those that heard him, but not

in the way of a regular history of our Lord's words. Mark, however, committed no mistake in writing some things as they occurred to his memory. For this one thing he made his care, to omit nothing which he had heard, and to say nothing false in what he related."

A.D. 178. Irenæus. "After the death or departure (ἐξοδον) of Peter and Paul, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter."

A.D. 194. Clement of Alexandria, as cited by Eusebius. "Clement informs us that the occasion of writing the Gospel according to Mark was this: Peter, having publicly preached the word at Rome, and having spoken the Gospel by the Spirit, many who were there entreated Mark to write the things that had been spoken, he having long accompanied Peter, and retaining what he had said: and that when he had composed the Gospel, he delivered it to them, who had asked it of him: which when Peter knew, he neither forbade it, nor encouraged it." In another place, Eusebius gives the following as Clement's account: "Peter's hearers at Rome, not content with a single hearing, nor with an unwritten instruction in the divine doctrine, entreated Mark, the follower of Peter, that he would leave with them, in writing, a memorial of the doctrine which had been delivered to them by word of mouth; nor did they desist until they had prevailed with him. Thus they were the means of writing the Gospel which is called according to St. Mark. It is said, that when the Apostle knew it, he was pleased with the zeal of the men, and authorized that scripture to be read in the churches."

A.D. 230. Origen. "The second Gospel is that according to Mark, who wrote it as Peter dictated it to him."

A.D. 315. Eusebius. "Peter out of an abundance of

modesty, thought not himself worthy to write a Gospel. But Mark, who was his friend and disciple, is said to have recorded Peter's relations of the acts of Jesus."

A.D. 368. Epiphanius. "Matthew wrote first, and Mark soon after him, being a companion of Peter at Rome."

A.D. 392. Jerome. "Mark, disciple and interpreter of Peter, at the desire of the brethren at Rome, wrote a short Gospel according to what he had heard related by Peter: which when Peter knew, he approved of it, and authorized it to be read in the churches: as Clement writes in the sixth book of his Institutions, and also Papias, bishop of Hierapolis. Peter also makes mention of this Mark in his epistle written at Rome, which he figuratively calls Babylon. Taking the Gospel which himself had composed, he went to Egypt, and at Alexandria founded a church of great note. He died in the eighth year of Nero,\* and was buried at Alexandria."

A.D. 398. By Chrysostom, Mark is said to have written his Gospel in Egypt, at the request of the believers there. However, at the end of that passage he says: "In what place each of the evangelists wrote, cannot be said with certainty."

These are the chief early testimonies; and they are not so satisfactory as we could wish as to the important point, whether Peter knew of and sanctioned what Mark wrote. It appears from the earlier ones, that this Gospel was not published till after Peter's death, which, according to Jerome and Bede, was in A.D. 68.

If it had been perfectly clear that Peter had given his sanction to this production of his follower, in so unequivocal

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\* There must be some mistake in fixing the 8th year of Nero, or A.D. 61, for Mark's death, since Jerome himself places Peter's death in the last year of Nero, or A.D. 68, *after which*, according to the chief testimonies, Mark preached his gospel.



a manner that it might be regarded as the Apostle's own declaration of his master's history, this Gospel would have a very high claim to credibility in its main features ; because no one had better means of knowing the truth ; and from what is recorded of Peter, the esteem of Jesus for him, the respect of the church, and the character of his own epistle, his statement must deserve at least a respectful examination. But to admit that whatever proceeded from this source must necessarily be true, would be an absurd extreme. We could say so much as this but of very few persons, even after knowing them most intimately. The amount of our acquaintance with Peter, after studying the whole of the New Testament, would not relieve us from the necessity of paying some regard to internal evidence and collateral support.

But the decided sanction of Peter is wanting. The early church authorities offer no proof of it, and do not seem to have relied much upon this point. It is possible that his follower Mark may have remembered or registered correctly what Peter said, and given it honestly. Therefore this second history of Jesus has still a high claim to respectful consideration. But the necessity of weighing the internal evidence is in this case stronger than in the former.

II. The first thing that attracts notice is the general similarity of the contents of this Gospel to those of the first. This agrees with the external evidence of the date, [soon after A. D. 68,] for two histories written near the same time would present generally the same facts, being those preserved at that time, and also the form in which those facts were then usually repeated. Augustine called Mark the epitomizer of Matthew ; and it is generally agreed that the two could not have corresponded to so great an extent, both in the narrations, discourses, and in particular expressions, without some means of connection, either by copying from each

other, or from some common document, or by recording the same oral traditions.

Nevertheless, a careful reading of Mark soon convinces us that he is not merely a copier. There is evidently the infusion of some historical details gathered from some other source than Matthew; relics apparently of real sayings and circumstances, by which he seems to bring us more nearly than the first evangelist does, into the presence of Jesus. Although probably mixing these relics of reality with some spurious matter, he seems to have had access to one of the channels of original information not very far from its source.

This must be judged of by the graphic nature of the details, their appropriateness of time and place, the improbability of invention, and other considerations difficult to classify, but which ordinarily influence us in receiving narrations as true. Thus :—

I. 34. He represents it as the general case that the demons did not speak themselves on being cast out, and intimates that it was a fact considered worthy of some notice, by adding the current explanation, viz. : that Jesus would not suffer them, “because they knew him.” The circumstance itself was doubtless true, for the course of tradition would rather be to enhance the wonder of the occurrence by words and acts of the demons themselves, as we find in some of the stories.

IX. 30. In relating one of the journeys through Galilee, Mark adds, “he would not that any man should know it.” Probably true, because Galilee was the tetrarchy of Herod, whom, as we learn from Matthew, Jesus was then avoiding. But Mark himself appears to be unconscious of this reason, and gives one which by no means explains the secrecy, viz. : his teaching the doctrine of his sufferings, verse 31.

IX. 38—40. Mark adds the incident of one whom John

had forbidden to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Jesus tells him not to "forbid him," and concludes, "for he that is not against us is on our part." This was very natural language for the head of a band of men bearing a political aspect, and under proscription as Jesus was at that time, in a country of which the populace were generally favourable to his views.

X. 1. In relating the arrival of Jesus in the coasts of Judea by the further side of Jordan, Mark says, "the people resort unto him *again*." The word "again" (*παλιν*) is not in Matthew, but it is eminently appropriate; Jesus had been in retreat, and could only appear again in public with safety, on arriving in another district.

X. 32. On going up to Jerusalem, Mark adds, "they were amazed and afraid." This was very natural. The entrance into the metropolis openly in their weak unprotected state, appeared to them so audacious as to excite alarm notwithstanding their trust in Jesus. Mark himself appears not to be alive to the political aspect of the proceedings, but the narration of Peter had probably preserved this trace of reality.

He frequently adds particulars which there could have been no motive for inventing; e. g., that the colt was found in a place where two ways met, xi. 4; that Jesus on first entering the temple, merely looked about upon all things, and returned the next day to expel the money-changers, xi. 11; the incident of the young man with the linen cloth, xiv. 51; that Simon the Cyrenian was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Minutiæ of this kind, natural in themselves, but without purport to the story, indicate strongly proximity to the narrations of an eye-witness. The cure of a deaf and dumb man, vii. 31—37; the cure of a blind man at Bethsaida, viii. 22—26; the story of the widow's mite, xii. 41;

some additional particulars concerning the raising of Jairus's daughter; and the cure of the lunatic after the transfiguration; bear also the appearance of being founded upon real incidents.

This forms nearly the whole of Mark's stock of separate information obtained from Peter or others, and is but a small part of the whole work. It is sufficient however to show that Mark as a narrator had some independent ground, and therefore that in the much larger part, where he repeats Matthew's narratives, these portions of Christ's history acquire considerable additional support. But it will be seen that there are some important parts of Matthew which he does not repeat.

III. Although Mark serves as a channel through which small additional fragments of the original transactions reach us, he himself seems to be in a great measure unconscious of the primary nature and meaning of those transactions. The distance of time and place caused the narrators to view facts which they were relating with substantial correctness, through the medium of existing ideas, rather than in the original light. This seems to have been the case to some degree with the compiler of Matthew; much more so with Mark. He sees things as might be expected from a Christian disciple writing at a distance from Judea, and at a time when the ideas of the Church had made some movement. The semi-political bearing of the Messianic scheme is by him lost sight of; the kingdom of God he identifies with the spread of the Gospel; Jewish types and prophecies are to him comparatively unimportant; and the indications of severe Judaism which occur in Matthew, are by him softened into a shape more fitted for Gentile readers. This more distant point of view influences his story so much, that the additional information he gives would be but of little use towards clearing



up the history of Jesus, if Matthew and Josephus had not supplied us with the key.

The outset of Jesus's ministry had been described by Matthew thus: "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," which agrees with the expectation described by Josephus, of the renovation of the theocracy. But Mark adds an explanation of the phrase very suitable to the ideas of a Gentile church; "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, *and believe the Gospel*," i. 14, 15. Believing the Gospel, according to his notion, was the kingdom of God. Christianity had become a system of belief.

The same thing is seen more strikingly in his account of the charge to the apostles. Matthew's account, x. 1—8, shows a very distinct design of the apostleship, viz.: to preach through the cities of Israel, that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." The gifts of healing, &c., were merely subsidiary powers for this main purpose. But Mark, having lost sight of the original purport of the apostolic mission, gives this laboured and meagre account of it, iii. 14, 15: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." The important point, what they were to preach, is omitted. Again in chapter vi. 7—13, he describes the sending forth of the twelve two by two; but the whole charge consists in giving power over unclean spirits, and directions for the mode of journey. He concludes merely, "and they went out, and preached *that men should repent*. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." All which by no means comes up to the signification of the

charge in Matthew. The striking Judaism in the account of his predecessor might have been an additional reason for Mark's curtailing and modifying it. Matt. x. 5—7: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was likely to be soon modified in a Gentile church.

The death of John the Baptist is related by Matthew as affording the motive for the retreat of Jesus, xiv. 12—13. "And (John's disciples) went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place." Mark gives the facts, but omits to see the connection, and probably unconsciously mars it, by the introduction of another verse. "And the apostles gathered themselves together to Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile."—vi. 30, 31. So that without Matthew, the important bearing of John's execution upon the conduct of Jesus would have been lost.

In several other places besides the charge to the apostles, Mark modifies the narrative of Matthew into a form better adapted for Gentile readers. For instance:—

Matt. xv. In the story of the Canaanitish woman, Jesus says, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Mark leaves this out altogether. "Then she fell down before him saying, Lord, help me. But he answered, and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Mark softens this for the Gentiles in this manner: *Let the children first be filled*, for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs."

Matt. xxiv. 20, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Mark has omitted the last clause.

Matt. xvii. 10, Jesus says that Elias was already come. "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Mark omits this explanation, so that it must be very doubtful to his readers who the Elias spoken of was. The point was chiefly interesting to Jews.

Matt. xix. 28, And Jesus said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Mark leaves this out, and proceeds with the rest of the promise, x. 29.

Most of Matthew's quotations from the prophets are omitted.

Amongst minor indications of distance from the original scene are the following. He calls Herod, the *king*, (vi. 14,) instead of the *tetrarch*, and speaks of the half of his *kingdom*; although Matthew had given the title correctly. The term *tetrarch* being unusual, and Herod Antipas less known than Herod the King, i. e. Herod the Great, it was natural for Mark and the Christians at Rome\* who did not study closely the Jewish history of the previous seventy years, to confound them. For Matthew's quotation from Isaiah vi. 9, "lest they should be converted, and *I should heal them*," Mark, less mindful of the expressions of a Jewish prophet, substitutes his own notion of the benefits of Christ's kingdom;

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\* A confusion of this kind, arising out of the historical fact of the suspicions entertained by Herod Antipas towards Jesus, might have occasioned Matthew's story of the attempt to seize the child on the part of Herod the king, who died probably two years before Jesus was born.

"lest they be converted, and *their sins should be forgiven them.*"—iv. 12. His account of the answer that Satan cannot cast out Satan, iii. 23, agrees nearly with Matthew's, except that he omits, "by whom do your children cast them out?" the meaning of which might be obscure to others than Jews. He describes the washings of "the Pharisees and of *all the Jews,*" vii. 3; the fastings, ii. 18; the river Jordan, i. 5; more in the tone of an indifferent observer, than of a native Jew, to whom such things must have been a kind of sacred knowledge from his youth.\*

IV. The style of Mark has strong peculiarities, earnestness, warmth, and almost child-like simplicity. He is contented with narrating facts, and omits all long discourses; anything controversial or obscure he sedulously shuns. See the conversation at the baptism, Matt. iii. 14, 15; the dialogue with Satan, Matt. iv. 3—10; "he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad," Matt. xii. 30; Matt. xii. 5—7; all omitted by Mark. Matthew's quotations from the prophets were also probably omitted because he could not perceive their application. He exhibits a great interest in his story, and gives all his strength to set it off to the best advantage: but this is done more by tautological expressions and mere repetitions than by the addition of fresh ideas to the more concise narrations of Matthew. Except in those few cases where he seems to bring additional information, Mark appears, in comparison with Matthew, a prolix second-hand narrator, who lengthens his story by many swollen expressions, without

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\* This imperfectly Judaical tone of Mark might arise also from his consciousness that he was to be read by Gentiles. If he was the same as John Mark, whose mother Mary had a house at Jerusalem, Acts xii. 12, he must have been well acquainted with Jewish usages. He might have been a proselyte, and the style noticed would be very natural in this case.



adding anything to the real force and point. For instance :

Mark i. 32—34, “ And at even, *when the sun did set,\** they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils, *and all the city was gathered together at the door.* And he healed *many that were sick of divers diseases,* and cast out *many devils,*” &c.

Mark ii. 18, “ And the disciples of John, *and of the Pharisees, used to fast,* and they come, and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not ?” &c.

Mark iv. 30, “ And he said, *Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?* It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds *that be in the earth.* But when it is sown it groweth up,” &c.

Mark vi. 49, “ But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out (*for they all saw him* and were troubled); and immediately *he talked with them,* and saith unto them,” &c.

Mark viii. 1, “ *In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat,* Jesus called his disciples to him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: *for divers of them came from afar.*”

The account of John's death, contained in ten verses in Matthew, is given by Mark in thirteen longer ones, without any thing strictly new.

Some of his embellishments might be thought somewhat

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\* The parts in Italics are in addition to Matthew.

to mar his narrative. iii. 5, "And when he had looked round about on them with anger;" 13, "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would, and they came unto him;" xi. 13, "For the time of figs was not yet;" v. 30, "And Jesus knowing immediately in himself that virtue was gone out of him."

He endeavours to aggrandize Jesus to the utmost that his materials will allow him, by repeating again and again the amazement of the beholders, ii. 12; vi. 2; the great numbers who were attracted by him, iii. 7, 8; vi. 56; so that there was no room about the door, ii. 2; so that they could not eat bread, iii. 20; vi. 31; by the reverent confession of the devils, i. 24; iii. 11; by the solemn preliminary of looking round about him previous to speaking, iii. 34; viii. 33; x. 27. But he has evidently much less talent and imagination than the compiler of the first Gospel, and although apparently well-disposed to enhance the marvellous complexion of his story, his additions, whether his own or selected by him, are of a very poor kind as compared with the bold poetical fictions of dreams, angels, and earthquakes in Matthew. See his edition of the story of the swine, where he has, in addition to Matthew's short story, these enhancements, that the demoniac had often broken his chains, that the unclean spirit gave his name Legion (in Latinized Greek), and on obtaining the consent of Jesus that they should not be sent out of the country, forthwith multiplied himself into a sufficient number of devils to fill a herd of swine in number about 2,000.\* This disposition to seize upon the mere child-

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\* By comparing this story with that of Eleazar and the bason in Josephus, Ant. viii. 2, 5, it would seem that the disturbance of some remote object was regarded as a proof of the demon's exit. Hence Matthew says the swine were a good way off. The upsetting of a bason of water bears an evident, though modest resemblance, to the sudden madness of 2,000 dis-

ishly marvellous without the poetical, is seen strongly in Mark's neglect of the greater part of the most eloquent discourses and parables in Matthew. By him they are either omitted or reduced to tame epitomes; whilst he devotes the space saved to the amazement and numbers of the multitudes, and other insipid amplifications.

Notwithstanding Mark's disposition to enhance the marvellous, in some of the accounts of miracles where he inserts additional particulars, these, apparently unintentionally on his part, render the miracle more doubtful than as it stands in Matthew: as in the account of the barren fig-tree. Matthew would make it appear that the tree withered *at once* when Jesus spoke; but from Mark we learn that it was only found withered the next day. So also in the case of the lunatic after the transfiguration: Mark's account shows that the demon convulsed the child *after* the words were spoken; a very important point, which does not appear in Matthew. And the additional miracle inserted by Mark, the cure of the deaf and dumb man, ch. vii., and of the blind man at Bethsaida, viii., are very different from the instantaneous miracles in Matthew.

V. But one most striking peculiarity observable on comparing the two Gospels, is the omission by Mark of some very important parts of Matthew. This omission must have much influence in determining the historical credibility of Matthew, and in order to reason upon it, we should first endeavour to decide whether Mark had seen or become acquainted with what Matthew had written.

It must be allowed that many of the acts and sayings of Jesus, being repeated frequently in the churches, must have

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tant swine. The more distant the object which the demon encountered in his invisible flight, the more clear and satisfactory must his expulsion appear.

acquired somewhat of a fixed form. The superstitious scrupulousness with which the Jews were accustomed to preserve the sayings of their Rabbins was favourable to the preservation of these fragments, although probably the original sayings were not preserved with an equal degree of exactness as in that case, from the disciples not being provided with the means of recording which probably formed part of the apparatus of the Jewish schools. Two independent histories, however, might be expected to contain many fragments closely resembling in form and expression.

But on the other hand, this method of preservation, especially during the lapse of forty years, must have been limited and insecure. Variations must have crept, in different churches, into the ways of narrating the same incident, and the order of the fragments must have been so perpetually disturbed, that we should hardly expect to find them cohering in the same succession for any considerable portion of the history. In fact, we recognize these disturbing influences in some parts of the three first Gospels, some of the stories being told in very different ways, and the order of events being very much dislocated.

These differences of narration and order existing to such a degree between the first three Gospels, (and the case is much stronger if we add the fourth,) as to prove that the means of preserving by oral tradition during such a length of time and in distant places, was very insecure; we have to consider whether that remarkable correspondence which the *greater* part of Mark exhibits with Matthew, can be accounted for by that means. The first part of Mark, to ch. vi. 14, is in such a different order to Matthew's, although the separate stories agree very closely, that it might of itself be supposed to be an independent history, probably founded on the same detached oral fragments. Yet, on the other hand, the diver-



gencies do not exclude the supposition of Mark's having made some use of Matthew even in this part; for he might have preferred to relate this first part of the history in the order in which he had been accustomed to hear it in his own church before Matthew wrote; availing himself of Matthew only as a ready-made and convenient collection of the fragments.

But from vi. 14, corresponding with Matt. xiv. 1, the two agree continuously; or with only such variations as do not dislocate the order, viz.: a few additions or omissions by Mark. The length of this agreeing part is so great, from the departure from Galilee to the death of Jesus, that it is difficult to imagine how the correspondence could have arisen except from copying. Two or three stories cohering together might be preserved in different channels of tradition, but not a history of ten chapters. The order of the occurrences was as liable to be partially disturbed by tradition as those during the journeys in Galilee. But we have the occurrences during the journey from Galilee, the abode at Jerusalem, the trial and crucifixion, all following in the same order in each. Whilst therefore the dislocation in the first six chapters does not disprove Mark's acquaintance with Matthew, the continuous and remarkable agreement in the next ten is strongly in favour of it.

The similarity of expressions not only in the discourses, but in the narration of events, seems to be more frequent and close than can be accounted for on any other hypothesis.

For instance:—

<p>Matt. iv. 18, And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net (αμφιβληστρον) into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he saith unto</p>	<p>Mark i. 16, Now, as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net (αμφιβληστρον) into the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said unto them, Follow me, and I will</p>
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them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets (δικτυα), and followed him. And going out from thence, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them, and they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Matt. viii. 2, And behold there came a leper, and made obeisance to him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way; shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

Matt. ix. 9, And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom (το τελωνιον); and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

Matt. xiii. 1, The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so

make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets (δικτυα) and followed him; and when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants (one word, μισθωτων), and went after him.

Mark i. 40, And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straightly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man, but go thy way; shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

Mark ii. 14, And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting at the custom house (το τελωνιον), and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

Mark iv. 1, And, behold, he began again to teach them by the sea side; and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered

that he went into a ship and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some fell by the way side, &c.

into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land; and he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, Hearken; behold there went out a sower to sow; and it came to pass as he sowed some fell by the way side, &c.

Matt. xiv. 22, And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitude away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain privately to pray.

Mark vi. 45, And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go before to the other side, over against Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

Matt. xiii. 33, Another parable spake he unto them. (Then follow at length the parables of the leaven, the treasure hid in a field, the pearls, the net cast into the sea, &c., and the explanation of the tares to the disciples.)

Mark iv. 33, And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them; and when they were alone, he expounded all things unto his disciples.

Correspondences of this kind abound throughout to such an extent, that whoever will take the trouble to collate the two carefully, can probably hardly resist the impression that Mark formed his own Gospel mainly from Matthew, with only such variations as his own peculiar characteristics and some additional information led him to introduce.\*

External probability is also in favour of Mark's acquaintance with Matthew's Gospel. The early churches kept up frequent communications with each other. The resort from

\* *Usum esse Marcum Matthæi evangelio, apertum facit collatio. Grotius ad Marc. I. 1.*

The correspondence of peculiar words and phrases in both Gospels is an irresistible evidence of their connection. Matt. xxiv. 22. *Οὐκ ἂν εἰσωθῇ πᾶσα σαρκίς*, literally, "there should not be saved all flesh," is allowed to be very remarkable Greek. The same occurs word for word in Mark. For more instances of this kind, see Michaelis on the Composition of the first three Gospels.

Rome and Alexandria to Palestine was frequent, and it cannot be doubted that the publication of such an interesting life of Christ as Matthew's must have excited much attention in the little separate world of the Christians. Mark writing soon after Matthew, could not but know that such a work existed, and even if it were not in current use at Rome or at Alexandria, must have been strangely remiss not to have read it. The third evangelist does expressly acknowledge his acquaintance with the previously written lives of Christ, and all the circumstances and reasons which led him to become acquainted with them existed also in the case of Mark.\*

Allowing then that both internal and external evidence lead us to the conclusion that Mark was acquainted with Matthew's Gospel, Mark becomes a kind of tacit commentator on his predecessor; and a more valuable one we could not have. We see how the first Gospel was treated by an intimate friend of Peter.

He evidently had not so reverent a regard for what Matthew had written as to prevent him from altering it at his own discretion. Variations in the discourses and in the minor accompanying incidents would not be sufficient to build any important inference upon; but he dismisses without notice some of Matthew's most striking facts.

He omits the miraculous birth and the flight into Egypt; yet begins his work with these words, "*The beginning of*

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\* That it was Mark who copied from Matthew, and not the converse, is very amply supported. The Fathers agreed that Mark wrote after Matthew, and the internal evidence from collation gives a strong impression to the same effect. The obscure in Matthew is omitted, explained or softened. Both the epitomes and amplifications of Mark have the appearance of being based upon the narrative as in Matthew. Some notes on this subject will be found in the Appendix. Very few commentators have held that Matthew copied from Mark.



the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God." Concerning the temptation, he says only, "The spirit driveth him into the wilderness, and he was there forty days tempted of Satan: and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."

He omits Peter's casting himself into the sea, Matt. xiv. 28—31; Christ's promise of the keys to Peter, xvi. 20; and his direction to him to pay the tribute from the fish's mouth, xvii. 24—27; although in the two former cases, at least, he appears to copy the context. Chrysostom concluded that Peter must have forbidden him to mention these things from modesty; but there appears no backwardness to do honour to Peter in this Gospel. See Mark i. 36; xiii. 3; xxi. 7; on which occasions Peter is not named by the other evangelists.

He omits the dream of Pilate's wife, the resurrection of the saints, and the earthquake during the crucifixion; although in each case he agrees closely with the context. In consequence of the last omission, the 39th verse, ch. xv., becomes somewhat illogical, for it thus attributes the centurion's exclamation, "Truly this man was the son of God," to Jesus's uttering a cry and expiring; which was not a reason, although the omitted earthquake might be, for this conviction in a Roman soldier.

Why did Mark choose to suppress these things? Not because he disliked the marvellous, for he has admitted abundance of other miracles; nor because he was in haste, for he has lengthened many parts of Matthew, and added some things of his own; moreover, one would think that such important miracles deserved a preference. It is difficult to avoid concluding, that he omitted them because he did not believe them, and did not expect to be believed if he related them. He had heard Peter, and was writing a book for the use of those who had heard him also. The other parts of

Matthew, which he transcribed or epitomized, were probably somewhat corroborated by Peter's preaching, and by the traditions carried to the church at Rome ; but for the passages in question, Mark found that the compiler of Palestine had not sufficient authority ; that they were not sanctioned by Peter or by any traditions of repute ; and from conscientiousness or prudence, he determined that his work should not be encumbered with so much bold and pure ornamental fiction.

It is impossible to regard Mark's suppression of these passages otherwise than as a tacit condemnation of Matthew. In later times, when the means of ascertaining the truth of each story had diminished, and the whole four Gospels came to be believed in a mass, as resting upon the same authority, divine inspiration, these same questionable passages have been favourite ones with Christians, as proving most strikingly the miraculous character of Jesus. The slight put upon them by Mark seems therefore to proceed from his greater proximity to the time when they were written, which gave him better means than others could have of judging of their truth. Mark's example, then, warns all readers of Matthew, that the latter is not to be implicitly trusted as far as regards historical credibility.

Admitting the possibility that Mark had not seen Matthew, (a case shown to be very improbable,) Matthew's credibility is not so strongly impugned, but still it is very much weakened by the omission of these things in a subsequent history of repute. For if the stories of the miraculous birth, resurrection of the saints, earthquake, &c., had been true, or even commonly believed among the apostles, Peter would surely have mentioned them sometimes during his preaching, and they were peculiarly of a nature to be caught up and repeated by the audience. The omission by Mark leads then to the in-

ference, that these stories were, in his circle, either unknown or disbelieved, and either case is nearly equivalent to their being untrue.

On the other hand, the parts of Matthew which are repeated by Mark, acquire thereby some additional evidence in their favour, and these parts are, the career of Jesus from his baptism till the disappearance of his body after the crucifixion, including many miraculous stories probably proceeding from germs of reality. But this agreement is far from making up sufficient evidence to establish fully the truth of any one particular narration independently of internal evidence, much more of a strictly miraculous incident: for Mark was not an eye-witness, but was obliged to augment his materials derived from Peter, by borrowing from Matthew or elsewhere. He was therefore very liable to repeat unintentionally some mere fiction.

VI. Upon the whole, Mark's Gospel taken by itself gives a less intelligible view of Jesus and his designs than the first; and owing to his omission of the discourses, and his more remote point of view, he would seem to present us with a mere wonderful tale of a person pursuing an extraordinary course without evident plan or object. But, placed by the side of Josephus and Matthew, it not only throws much additional light on the attempt of Jesus to assume the Messiahship, but marks one grade in the modifications under which his followers subsequently viewed him. No new subjects, however, are introduced: the distress of Jerusalem, and the persecutions of the church, are dwelt upon so prominently as to show that it was written at a time when these were still the most interesting topics. Inferior to the first Gospel in imagination and eloquence, there is yet in Mark so much of earnestness and simplicity, as to give a very strong reflection of the modes of thought in the christian society of which

he was a member. Jesus of Nazareth is to most of them personally unknown; the title, Son of God, which it was the duty and pride of the church to apply emphatically to him, begins to awaken a degree of mystic reverence; and the believer feels bound to relate every act and saying in terms of submissive admiration. Yet, although the above title, continually repeated among gentiles, must probably acquire some different associations to those which strict Jews would allow, it does not appear that Mark had taken the pains to define clearly his conception of the designation which he places so conspicuously in front of his Gospel: certainly there are no indications that he or his circle were yet in possession of the ideas of the *logos* and its incarnation, which afterwards were made to supply such ample meaning to the term.\*

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\* Credner, Einl. § 56, p. 122, comes to rather a different conclusion respecting the authorship of the second Gospel. "The great correspondence in expression between this Gospel and those of Matthew and Luke, shows incontrovertibly, even without further evidence, its original composition in the Greek language. As far as relates, on the other hand, to the time and place of composition, Eusebius appears to be our only authority. He himself however rests his statement on the sayings of Clement of Alexandria and Papias. The statement of Clement is opposed with precisely equal weight to that of Irenæus, so that there remains to us only the oldest and weightiest of all, the testimony of the Presbyter John in Papias. The latter tells us certainly, in agreement with the tradition of the church, that a follower of Peter, named Mark, had noted down separate evangelic records delivered by the Apostle, but the description which is given at the same time of these notes, does not correspond with our Gospel of Mark. *This Gospel therefore in its present form cannot be the work of Mark.*"

The supposed disagreement with the description of Papias, is the historical order in which the Gospel is drawn up, whereas Papias said that Mark wrote "what he remembered, but not in the order (*ταξις*) in which things were spoken or done by Christ;" also that "Peter made his discourses not in the way of a regular history" (*συνταξις*).

Yet this does not clearly indicate that Papias had in view any other composition than our present Gospel of Mark, for he might intend to disprove merely of its chronological order, and not to deny that it was at-



tempted to be written in some order. The last sense seems to apply to Peter's discourses only.

But would not Mark himself have written in Latin, since he wrote for the church at Rome? Possibly he had in view the churches of Alexandria and the East also. The traditions had acquired a fixed form in the Greek. The latter was the apostolic tongue. If Mark had written in Latin, Papias might have been expected to notice it, since he tells us the *λογια* of Matthew were written in Hebrew.

## CHAPTER V.

ON THE DATE AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL OF  
ST. LUKE.

THE prefaces to this Gospel and the Acts show that both proceed from the same author, and the earliest traditions agree that he was Luke, the companion of Paul, mentioned Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24. There is some reason for supposing that he was the same as Silas.\*

This Gospel, like the others, is not alluded to in any of the speeches in the Acts, nor in the Epistles.†

A. D. 96. Clement of Rome has a passage agreeing exactly with Luke xvii. 2; but nearly the same sentence is in Mark.

\* The pronoun *we* first occurs in the narrative of the Acts, at ch. xvi. 10. "We endeavoured to go into Macedonia." The only companions of St. Paul at this time appear to have been Silas and Timothy. (See xv. 40; xvi. 3, 4, 6.) In this case either St. Paul, Silas, or Timothy, wrote the Acts.

It was neither Timothy nor Paul himself, ch. xx. 4. "And there accompanied him (Paul) into Asia, Sopater of Berea . . . and Timotheus, &c. These going before, tarried for *us* at Troas."

Also ch. xx. 13, "And we went before to ship, and sailed into Assos, there intending to take in Paul."

Therefore Silas was the writer. Wherever the pronoun *we* occurs, throughout the Acts, there is no objection to supposing that Silas was of the company. The name Silas, or Silvanus, has nearly the same meaning as Lucas or Lucanus, the one being derived from *Silva*, a wood, and the other from *Lucus*, a grove; each being probably merely a latinized form of the author's original Greek or Hebrew name.

† John the Baptist's preaching is mentioned Acts xiii. 25, and the Lord's supper 1 Cor. xi. 23, in words agreeing very nearly with Luke. But neither passage is introduced as a quotation; and it is more likely that Luke should have borrowed from Paul, than the converse.

A. D. 140. Justin Martyr mentions the visit of Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, in the words of Luke i. 35—38; and Christ's agony, in the words of Luke xxii. 42; both which texts have no parallel one in the other Gospels. He does not mention Luke by name, but frequently speaks of the Gospels or memoirs composed by the Apostles *and their companions*, as his authority.

A. D. 178. Irenæus is the first who names Luke as the author of a Gospel. After speaking of Mark, he says, "And Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him."—"But the Gospel according to Luke being of a priestly character, begins with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God."—"But if any one rejects Luke, as if he did not know the truth, he will be convicted of throwing away the Gospel, of which he professeth to be a disciple. For there are many, and those very necessary, parts of the Gospel which we know by his means."

A. D. 194. Clement of Alexandria (according to Eusebius) "had a tradition that the Gospels containing the genealogies were first written."

A. D. 230. Origen. "The third Gospel is that according to Luke, the Gospel commended by Paul, published for the sake of the Gentile converts."

A. D. 392. Jerome. "The third evangelist is Luke, the physician, a Syrian of Antioch, who was a disciple of the apostle Paul, and published his Gospel in the countries of Achaia and Bœotia."

A. D. 596. Isidore, of Seville. "Matthew wrote his Gospel first in Judea; then Mark in Italy; Luke, the third, in Achaia; John, the last, in Asia."

II. The most prevalent opinion, then, was, that Luke's Gospel was written the third in order of time; which agrees well with the internal evidence, for, on comparing the three,

there is much appearance that Luke made use of both Matthew and Mark.

In addition to internal evidence and conjecture, which apply to the case of Luke as well as that of Mark, he himself gives a Preface which assists us in deciding whether he made use of his predecessors. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which were from the beginning eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

Luke does not in this state precisely the sources of his information, for the phrase, "having had perfect knowledge of all things from the very first," is a vague one. His words certainly do not imply that he borrowed from some of the many who went before him; but neither do they disclaim it so distinctly as to set aside the internal evidence of his having done so. Matthew and Mark are the only Gospels extant which could have been amongst the many alluded to;\* and it seems very evident, on examination, that Luke drew largely from both, and especially from Mark. Compare

Luke iv. 1—12, with Matt. iv. 1—11.	Luke vi. 1—11, with Mark ii. 23—iii. 6.
— iv. 38—44, with Mark i. 29—39.	— viii. 26—39, with Mark v. 1—20.
— v. 12—15, with Mark i. 40—45, and Matt. viii. 1—4.	— ix. 23—36, with Mark viii. 34; ix. 10.
— v. 18—38, with Mark ii. 3—22, and Matt. ix. 2—8.	— xxii. 7—13, with Mark xiv. 12—16.

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\* Origen argued that Luke could not intend to include Matthew and Mark amongst the many, because they did not "take in hand (*επεχειρησαν*) to write," but wrote. Most Christian writers have been anxious to prove



When his two predecessors have the same story, Luke generally seems to prefer transcribing from Mark, but occasionally supplies an expression from Matthew: Luke xx. 8—47, Mark xi. 33, xii. 40, compared with Matt. xxi. 27; xxii. 46. Here, where Mark omits, Luke omits also, but verse 18 he seems to have supplied from Matthew. See also Luke xx. 45—47, agreeing closely with Mark xii. 38—40, whilst Matthew xxiii. 5—14 is much longer; Luke xviii. 15, compared with Mark x. 13, and Matt. xix. 13.

Luke is, however, by no means so much dependent on his two predecessors as Mark is upon Matthew. He has a great many stories and parables not found in the other two; it therefore seems likely that he took these from some of the other writings which he alludes to, now lost, or that he selected them from the current traditions. Also he might have learned some things himself from the original eye-witnesses; but as he does not say which these are, it is impossible to discover what parts of his Gospel have this superior authority.

III. The kind and degree of connection between the first three Gospels are not very easy to explain satisfactorily; for whilst many long passages agree so closely as to imply almost literal transcribing, others, partially agreeing, contain variations inconsistent with the idea that one evangelist had the works of the others before him.\* The hypothesis of a com-

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the same point, but apparently without any better argument. (See Lardner, vol. v. p. 383.) Others have contended that the term does not imply disrespect. Its use by Luke, Acts ix. 29; xix. 13, is unfavourable rather than otherwise to this assertion. His tone is certainly devoid of that respectful submission with which Matthew and Mark have subsequently been regarded.

\* Credner says, "Many have adopted the view that the relationship of the three evangelists is altogether inexplicable; nay, many have considered this inexplicability as a work of Providence. Others have contented themselves with pointing out the unsatisfactory nature of the at-

mon document, from which they all drew materials, has been generally given up, both from the want of evidence of its existence, and from its insufficiency to supply the explanation wanted.\* The hypothesis of their repeating the same oral or written fragments could not of itself account for the many long and remarkable agreements; for Luke, even more than Mark, has many instances which show how much tradition was capable of modifying the narration of the same incident. And, on the other hand, it would be unsafe to infer copying wherever a remarkable agreement occurs, because a repetition of the same fragments might occasion such agreements to a great extent.

Luke doubtless, as well as Mark, had been in the habit of hearing the fragments of sayings and stories related so often in the Christian churches, and probably of repeating them himself, that he could, without referring to any previous

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tempts at explanation hitherto made. De Wette, on the contrary, candidly acknowledges in the preface to the first edition of his *Einleitung*, that he has not satisfied himself in the researches on the formation of the three first Gospels."—*Einleitung*, § 73.

\* In order to account for the agreements between the first three Gospels, Eichhorn and Bishop Marsh maintained that there must have been an original Aramaic document which was the common source of them all. But there appears to be no historical evidence of the existence of such a document. The translator of Schleiermacher's *Critical Essay on Luke* says, "The German critic's ingenious and specious investigation of this supposed document, and the tempting facilities it offered for the solution of the problem, seem to have dazzled the judgment of his followers, and to have prevented him from scrutinizing the groundwork of his whole fabric with his usual vigilance. In the dissertation itself, the probability of such a document having ever existed is not thought deserving of any discussion."—*Translator's Introduction*, p. 25. Yet, not to insist upon this point, the difficulties of explaining the agreements on Eichhorn's hypothesis were found to be so great, that in a later work he published an improved form of it, viz. that *four different copies* of the supposed Aramaic original must have formed the basis of the three Gospels.

Schleiermacher himself says, "Without assenting to all the arguments which Hug opposes to Eichhorn's hypothesis of an original Gospel, I think he has, upon the whole, succeeded in making the thing improbable in the

history, have written a very copious Gospel; and as he lived at the same time as the other two, had been in company with the same Apostles as they, and frequented the same churches, he would have in many cases the same version of a story. And if we allow that one or both of them preceded him by several years, the very circumstance of the existence of a written Gospel would tend to give a more fixed character to such versions. Luke might therefore have much agreeing matter influenced by the two former, although not borrowed directly by himself. But in some cases, when his memory failed, or he found that those two had things with which he was imperfectly acquainted, he would naturally abridge, paraphrase, or even transcribe at length, from them.

These combined considerations account very well for the relationship of Luke to his two predecessors, although no separate one would do so entirely. Thus :

eyes of all unprejudiced persons.”—*Introd.*, p. 2. “For my part it is quite enough to prevent me from receiving Eichhorn’s theory, that I am to figure to myself our evangelists surrounded by five or six open rolls or books, and that too in different languages, looking by turns from one into another, and writing a compilation from them. I fancy myself in a German study of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, rather than in the primitive age of Christianity.”—*Ibid.*, p. 6.

De Wette concludes his remarks on the supposed document thus : “These and other arguments have lately become so apparent to most persons, that one can now only wonder how this hypothesis could once have found acceptance with so many.”—*Lehrbuch*, § 85.

Mill says, “That Luke’s Gospel was published after those of Matthew and Mark, appears, on the comparison of the three, clearer than light. For nothing is plainer than that Luke borrowed the very phrases and expressions of Matthew and Mark, nay, whole paragraphs word for word.”—*Mill, Proleg.*, p. 116.

Wetstein says, “That Luke took many things from Matthew, and more from Mark, appears on collating them.”—*De Lucâ*, ap. T. Gr., tom. i. p. 643.

Michaelis says, “It is wholly impossible that three historians, who have no connection, either mediate or immediate, with each other, should harmonize as Matthew, Mark, and Luke do.”—*Origin of the first three Gospels*, ch. i.

1. A large portion of his Gospel is in addition to those of the other two ; being things which his greater industry or more extensive acquaintance in the churches supplied him with.

2. Part consists of the same incidents, but narrated in a very different form, and which Luke probably preferred to that adopted by his predecessors. His story of the woman with the alabaster box of ointment, vii. 36, is very different from that in the other two, although the points of agreement show that the same fact forms the foundation of all the three stories. His genealogy and history of Christ before his baptism contradict Matthew. His parable of the talents differs widely from that in Matthew. Also that of the wedding-supper. The call of Simon and the sons of Zebedee he accompanies with the miraculous draught of fishes. The denial by Peter is related very differently. This wide difference of narration is important, because it shows that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, although doubtless much esteemed at that time, were not considered by Luke as in all cases the best authorities.

3. In some cases he seems to give nearly the same oral fragments or traditions, although without borrowing from the other two ; the slight variations being such as might arise in different verbal repetitions of the fragment, but unnatural to a copier. See the catalogue of the Apostles, vi. 14—16, in which there is some inversion of the order, and some variation in the names ; he adds also a prayer the night before.

The accusation respecting Beelzebub, xi. 14—23, agrees with Matthew and Mark to such an extent that it might have been derived from the same often-repeated tradition ; but the omission of some striking verses of those two, and the difference in the similitude of the strong man, are against the idea that Luke was in this case copying.



The reference to Jonas, xi. 29, resembles Matthew's in great part, but Luke has "the people" instead of "the Scribes and Pharisees," and inverts the order of the following references to "the queen of the South" and "the men of Nineveh," all which discrepancies are unnatural to one copying from Matthew.

The discourse, xii. 1—9, beginning "there is nothing covered, &c.," agrees closely with part of the charge to the Apostles, Matt. x. But the separation from the context, and the variation of "five sparrows for two farthings," instead of "two sparrows for a farthing" in Matthew, which would be frivolous if designed, are against the idea of copying.

The discourse on sending fire on the earth, xii. 49—53, is evidently the same as Matt. x. 34—37. "I am not come to send peace but a sword;" but this, and the list of the contending kindred, are so much varied as to show that Luke is giving an independent version of the same fragment.

The woes upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, x. 13—15, agree closely with Matt. xi. 21—23; but would one copying have omitted Matthew's eloquent conclusion "for if the mighty works, &c." in order to substitute the much less appropriate verse "he that heareth you, &c."?

The feeding of the 5000, Luke ix. 10—17, much resembles the account of both Matthew and Mark; but not so as to leave the impression that he copied directly. He adds that the desert place was near Bethsaida; he says that they sat down in fifties, instead of hundreds and fifties, as in Mark; besides minor variations.

In the transfiguration, Luke says, "after about eight days," instead of six days; an unnatural variation if he had the others before him. He differs from both, more than Mark does from Matthew. The "being heavy with sleep" is additional.

4. All these last instances of general agreement with partial variation, might also be explained by supposing that Luke had heard or read his predecessor's accounts so as to have them partially infixed in his memory, but that he did not refer to them when writing. This is perhaps a better explanation of the following :

The story of the blind man near Jericho, xviii. 35—43, agrees very nearly with Mark ; but he places it as Jesus was coming *to* Jericho, instead of going *from* it ; a difference which might easily glide into a recollection of Mark's verse 46, which is more confused than Matthew's 29.\*

The prediction of sufferings, ix. 22—27, excepting the omission of Peter's rebuke, agrees partly with Matthew, and partly with Mark ; with neither so continuously as if he had them before him. It is more likely that he had heard both their narratives, and mingled them with his own from memory.

The account of the last supper, xxii. 14—20, contains the substance and most of the expressions of Matthew and Mark, so as to appear to be borrowed from them by recollection. But the transposition of the bread and wine, and Luke's verse 19 near the end, being the same as Mark's beginning, indicate that he had not those two before him when he wrote.

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\* This is as palpable an instance of oversight or discrepancy as could well be selected, and it has given much trouble to the advocates of divine inspiration. Augustine said there must have been two similar miracles. "*Nihil aliud restat intelligere, nisi bis esse factum hoc miraculum.*"—*Quest. Evang.*, l. ii. qu. 48, 1. Origen confessed that the attempt to reconcile the inconsistencies of the evangelists made him giddy. *Comment. in Johan.*, t. ii. p. 151. Edit. Huet.

Grotius endeavours to reconcile the evangelists by torturing the word *εγγίζειν*. He says, besides its usual sense, to draw near to a place, it might mean merely to be not far from it. But that the former is the sense of Luke in this place is shown by xix. 1, "and Jesus *entered*, and passed through Jericho." *i. e.* immediately after the cure.

5. Some parts of Luke appear to be mere paraphrases or abridgments of Matthew and Mark.

The story of the mother and brethren of Jesus, viii. 19—21, is a good abbreviation of the accounts in both Matthew and Mark, which are harsh and tautological.

In relating the capture of Jesus, xxii. 47—53, Luke begins as if following Matthew and Mark, but the rest might be an abridgment or free paraphrase.

6. But in other cases, the agreement is so close and continuous as to give the impression that he had his predecessors before him, and referred to them whilst writing. See the stories of the little children, xviii. 15, 16; the rich young man, and promise to the disciples, xviii. 18—30; the entry into Jerusalem, xix. 29—38; the authority of John, xx. 2—8; the parable of the husbandmen, xx. 9—18; preparing the passover, xxii. 7—13.

In the expressions in each story, Luke generally agrees much more closely with Mark than with Matthew; and the same is the case with respect to his order. In the first six chapters of Mark, where his arrangement contrasts so strangely with Matthew's, Luke agrees with the former with respect to twenty-eight events or sayings, there being only five dislocations, besides additions and omissions. From thence to Mark x. 13, Luke's order presents no conceivable relation to that of the other two; but subsequently it agrees with them both, still however more closely with Mark, to the crucifixion. The agreements in order are long enough to form another strong argument that Luke was acquainted with one or both of his predecessors.

Since it appears that Luke borrowed from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, we must suppose that he also borrowed from some others of the many Gospels written previously to his own. We learn from Jerome that a story of the appear-

ance of Jesus, apparently the same as that in Luke xxiv. 36—43, was in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

If a person were now to sit down to write a Gospel, the most full and copious possible, he would blend the stories in the four already written, with all that he could collect elsewhere. From having frequently heard those already existing, he might write much from memory, but sometimes would refer to them in order to extract or abridge. Thus there would result a composition agreeing partially with each one of the four Gospels, but with no one of them throughout; having some very close agreement as to matter, expression, and order, and some striking disagreement: that is, presenting the same kind of phenomena that Luke does with respect to Matthew and Mark, although in his case they are more marked, because he had a much larger proportion of additional materials, and also because in his time Matthew and Mark do not appear to have been regarded with that submissive deference which is now paid to the four Gospels.\*

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\* These remarks on the Gospels are the result of the writer's own study of them; but the subject is more amply worked out in Credner's *Einleitung*, § 74—92. His conclusions I gather to be these: Oral traditions of the acts and sayings of Jesus formed the only Gospel till after the fall of Jerusalem. These traditions were at first in Hebrew, and soon translated into Greek. Owing to the reverence of the church for the subject matter, and the poverty of the Greek idiom known to the lower Jews, these traditions came to have a kind of fixed form. These were repeated as occasion required, without regard to chronological order. But gradually as the eye-witnesses disappeared one after another, variations crept in as to names of persons, places, &c., and the tradition approximated more and more to the character of a legend. The Apostle Matthew had compiled the *λογια* in Hebrew at an early period. Some Palestinian Jew made these the foundation of a Gospel, calling to his aid the writings of Mark in *their original form*, and the existing oral tradition. Some other person made the notices set down by Mark, Peter's companion, the groundwork of a second Gospel, and this recomposition was the occasion of the early disuse and disappearance of the original notices written by Mark himself. Luke made use of the *λογια* of Matthew and the original notices of Mark, and possibly also of our two canonical Gospels; also of the existing oral traditions.



IV. Some have been of opinion that Matthew and Luke wrote first, and that it was Mark who copied from them both.\* The external evidence of Luke's priority is not sufficiently decided to settle the point; and the internal evidence consists chiefly in the impression left by collating the three. Firstly, The additions in Mark's peculiar style of futile amplification and tautology have had apparently some influence on Luke's narratives, where traces of them are found; but he himself would not probably have originated them, being in general a writer of force and good taste. For instance: Luke iv. 38, 40; v. 17, 29, 30, 35. Secondly, Luke, in other places, expresses Mark's additions in a simplified or more forcible manner, which has the appearance of an ulterior edition: iv. 15, 31, 33, 37, 39; v. 26; vi. 6—11. Thirdly, Although he sometimes retrenches what is superfluous, (Mark ii. 19,) or of strange sound in Mark, (ii. 13; iii. 5,) he has frequently additions of his own which further enhance the story. Luke iv. 40, 41; v. 28; xxii. 50. Fourthly, Luke has nearly all that Mark has in addition to Matthew, and much more besides.

Now if Mark had been following Luke, it is difficult to explain why he should have preferred him to Matthew with respect to the narrative of particular stories, and yet omit by far the greater part of the stories which Luke has in addition. The parts of Matthew omitted by Mark are chiefly the long discourses, (and these are generally epitomized,) or some of the more obviously legendary parts. But the parts of Luke not found in Mark consist in great part of narratives as probable and parables as interesting as any in the Gospels.

V. From as large a collection of materials as he could obtain,

\* For the order Matthew, Mark, Luke—Grotius, Mill, Wetstein, Hug, Semler, Townson, Seiler.

Matthew, Luke, Mark—De Wette, Griesbach, Theile, Fritsche, Siefert.

it appears that Luke intended to write in order a history of Jesus from the first, but that he soon found the task too difficult with respect to the order; for, after the first few chapters, his narrative becomes so jumbled and confused, that the reader can form no clear idea of the course of events. It has the appearance of a mass of anecdotes and sayings, put down as they came to the author's notice, with very little regard to time or place, instead of a regular narrative, like Matthew's. Nearly the whole of Matthew and Mark may be traced in different parts of Luke, but much cut up and displaced. It seems probable that he endeavoured to accommodate as large a portion as he could of those two to his other materials; but finding that some sayings and facts were thus left out, in his anxiety to make his Gospel complete, he inserted the fragments where he could. (See Luke xvi. 16—18; xvii. 1—10; xi. 34—36; xiv. 34, 35.) That his order, rather than Matthew's, is generally erroneous, is shown by the inappropriateness of the context, and his want of clearness as to time and place; for instance:—

Luke xii. 54. The reference to the sign of the times is here made abruptly, and to the people, who consequently seem to be called hypocrites without occasion. But in Matthew xvi. 2, it is in answer to the Pharisees who had been asking a sign from heaven.

Luke xxii. 30. The promise of twelve thrones is put in a speech rebuking the disciples' desire of greatness, at the last supper. But in Matthew xix. 28, it is in answer to Peter's inquiry, "what shall we have?" on the approach to Jerusalem.

Luke xi. 37. The woes against the Pharisees are here represented as spoken by Jesus at the house of a Pharisee who had invited him to dinner. But in Matthew xxiii. they are part of a discourse to the people.

Luke ix. 51. "He steadfastly set his face to go to Je-

rusalem." x. 38. "It came to pass as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house." This must have been at Bethany, near Jerusalem, since Martha's house was there. Yet Luke seems afterwards to have forgotten or to be ignorant that he had brought Jesus so near to Jerusalem, for at ch. xiii. 31, he represents him as still in Herod's jurisdiction, *i. e.* in Galilee: and at ch. xvii. 11, he says, "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria *and Galilee*." This shows not only the incorrectness of Luke's order of events, but that he attended very little to the locality of the scenes which he was describing.

The attempt to preserve the order of the narrative appears to be continued to the end of ch. x; for, so far, one incident is generally connected with the preceding by some remark indicating the interval of time: vi. 1, "and it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first;" 13, "and when it was day;" vii. 1, 11; viii. 1; ix. 1, 28, 37, 57; x. 1, 21, 38. But from the beginning of ch. xi. the notices of this kind are less clear and frequent: the reader has no means of judging when and where the events happen, further than that they are in a certain place, in a certain village, in the house of a certain Pharisee, &c. On arriving at that part of his work, Luke seems to have grown tired, or to have discovered the impossibility of the task he had undertaken to set forth his materials in order, and to have been satisfied to dispose of the rest in the form of miscellaneous memoirs, until he comes to the arrival at Jericho, ch. ix.

In some places acts and sayings of Jesus are thrown in with no kind of connexion with the context, or they are appended to some discourse with which the occurrence of some one similar word or idea forms a kind of associating link; which might be the only "order" in some cases to which

Luke could attain. See for instance, Luke vii. 36. The story of eating with the Pharisee, and of the visit of the sinful woman, appear to be placed here, because ver. 34 contains the saying, "he came eating and drinking with publicans and sinners." xi. 34, "The light of the body is the eye, &c.," has no connexion here, except that the preceding verse has the allusion to the candle under a bushel. xi. 37, Jesus is invited to dine with a Pharisee: thence Luke passes on by association to the woes upon the Pharisees, ver. 42; thence to the woes for the slaughter of the prophets, ver. 47; thence to the laying wait of the Scribes and Pharisees to catch something out of his mouth, ver. 53, 54—placed by Matthew much better after the arrival at Jerusalem. xii. 9, "He that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God:" to this he adds the kindred saying, "whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him," a juxtaposition which occasions an apparent contradiction; whereas Matthew had placed the latter saying very well after the accusation concerning Beelzebub. Again, as this last saying contained an allusion to the Holy Ghost, Luke adds immediately, ver. 11, the advice not to premeditate discourses, "for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye shall say;" which Matthew again had placed much more suitably in the charge to the Apostles, Matt. x. 19. xiii. 33, "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," is placed by Luke very suitably on the determination to proceed thither; but it recalls to him the woes for killing the prophets, and the end of that discourse, viz. the lamentation over Jerusalem, which he therefore adds here, much less appropriately than where Matthew places it. xvi. 13, "No servant can serve two masters;" introduced apparently for no other reason than that Mammon had been mentioned previously.



The very abruptness with which the sayings are frequently given by Luke, and the absence of introductory narrative, such as Matthew usually gives, together with the almost unintelligible form and connexion in which the sayings are sometimes presented, xii. 49, xvi. 9—12, xxii. 38; are indications of Luke's fidelity in giving his materials as he found them existing. Probably in some instances, he himself knew not what meaning ought to be attached to what he was reporting. The original occasion being lost sight of, and some words changed or lost during the progress of tradition, the church repeated with reverence a distorted and mysterious fragment, of which the enigmatical character might appear the better to entitle it to preservation.

Another indication of Luke's fidelity is, that in recording the sayings of Jesus or the traditions of such sayings, he confines himself to fragments and parables, without expanding into long discourses suitable to his own position and time, such as we find in Matthew and John. It is true that there are in Luke, portions of the discourses relative to the persecutions of the church and the fall of Jerusalem, but it appears most probable that he borrowed, either by recollection or transcribing, from Matthew or Mark. A companion of Paul, if more a controversialist than a compiler, might have put into the mouth of Jesus very copious and decided discourses respecting the abrogation of the Jewish law, and the union of Jews and Gentiles by faith alone in the Messiah. But on these subjects Luke has very little in addition to what we find in the others. The destruction of Jerusalem is introduced by Luke with these additional particulars;—"they shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This implies that Jerusalem had already been trodden down for some time when

Luke wrote. Matthew, we have seen, does not carry on his description to what took place after the siege, but prophesies that "*immediately* after those days shall the sun be darkened, and the sign of the Son of Man appear in heaven," &c. Luke repeats the substance of this popular prophecy, to which Matthew had probably contributed to give a fixed form, but as if he had seen that the sign did *not* come immediately after the siege, he avoids the word *εὐθὺς*, "*immediately*," and retains only the second term of the prophecy's fulfilment: "this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." This confirms strongly the opinion that Luke wrote some years at least later than Matthew.

VI. In his preface, Luke seems to betray some consciousness of superiority over those who had "taken in hand" to write before him. He comes before the noble Theophilus with the same dignified freedom as his friend Paul before Festus and Agrippa; and his work may be thought to justify some degree of self-complacency. It is allowed by the learned to be written in better Greek than any of the other Gospels; the style is more simple and clear, and his energetic conciseness and ease of expression contrast especially with the laboured and childish style of Mark. If the large amount of his materials indicates industry, the character of them betokens also no low degree of literary taste. The fictions which he adopts have generally more of poetical interest, and less of mere rude marvellousness, than those of Matthew. The visit of Gabriel to Zacharias, and afterwards to Mary, the scenes at the temple, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, of Jesus to the two disciples at Emmaus, seem to proceed from a more refined imagination, as well as a more practised pen, than the tales of Joseph and the angel, Herod and the Magi. The parables also which he adds, the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the good Samaritan,

Lazarus and Dives, &c., are equal in point and interest to any in the Gospels. No collection perhaps exists which can give so high an idea of the power which must have belonged to one excelling in this favourite method of Eastern teaching.

The tone of the morality in Luke, however, has not perhaps the same comparative superiority. In him, more than in the others, appear the overstrained devotion, the asceticism, and the incipient monachism of the Therapeutæ. Poverty and distress are represented as giving a claim to compensation in heaven, in such terms that the merit even of voluntary privation and penance might very naturally be inferred from them. vi. 20—26 : xvi. 19—31. The corresponding beatitudes in Matthew do not admit of this turn. The high notion which Luke entertained of the merit and efficacy of prayer, reminds one more of an Egyptian or Syrian anchorite, than of the liberal and intellectual devotion of Socrates and Plato. Retirement into the wilderness to pray ; prayer to God for a whole night ;—are introduced in all convenient intervals of narration, as if with an anxiety to show that this was the favourite and habitual exercise of Jesus, v. 16 ; vi. 12 ; ix. 18 ; xi. 1 ; and in two instances the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer is actually carried to the extent, that importunity, if persevering enough, will at last undoubtedly move heaven. xi. 8 ; xviii. 5.

Since each evangelist imparts somewhat of his own principles or feelings to his chief personage, Jesus appears in this Gospel to partake not a little of the character of a leader, seeking to acquire the reverence of his followers by an ostentatious disparagement of worldly enjoyments and the practice of unwonted sanctity. The piety of the Essenes generally tended to this extreme ; but nowhere so much as in Luke does it appear exaggerated to a form at variance with the ordinary feelings and necessities of mankind.



The doctrine of forgiveness upon repentance is urged by Luke in such a manner as to countenance rather than guard against the dangerous exaggeration that the repentant sinner is in a more desirable condition than the just man who needs no repentance. The parable of the lost sheep teaches this in express terms, xv. 7. And in the pleasing parable which follows, the encouragement given to the virtuous elder brother seems in reality too limited in comparison with the festive welcome of the prodigal, whose repentance arose merely from distress, and as yet had not proved its sincerity by reformation. The grovelling humility of the publican, unaccompanied, as far as the story shows, by any change of conduct, leaves us in doubt whether to prefer it to the conceited righteousness of the Pharisee. This apparent estimation of repentance without regard to its fruits, is another indication of Luke's sympathy with those Eastern sects who considered abasement of the human being, both in body and mind, the best preparative for the favour of heaven.

The apparent object of Jesus is in this Gospel also, the preparation for the kingdom of God; and some of the additional historical relics which it preserves, bear strong indications of the political views which were included in the idea. xix. 11—27; xxiii. 2. But upon the whole, Jesus does not appear so exclusively the Jewish Messiah as in Matthew; the more harsh texts in Matthew x. 5, 6; xv. 24, appearing to limit his mission to Jews only, are not found in Luke; and he represents Jesus (as might be expected from the companion of the Apostle to the Gentiles,) as the king indeed who was to reign over the house of Jacob, but whose salvation should extend to all people.

Among minor peculiarities, the frequent use of the appellation "the Lord," as applied to Jesus, is another indication of greater remoteness of time and place than in Matthew.



The latter, as well as Mark, preserves generally the simple designation Jesus, by which, with the addition of the name of his father or town, he was probably known in his lifetime. His disciples added, "the Master," "Jesus the Christ," "the Lord Jesus;" but "the Lord" simply (*ὁ Κύριος*) is a further gradation, since it is the term applied in the Septuagint to God. Yet in Luke it cannot be taken to be more than a term of indefinitely exalted reverence, for there are no other indications that he, any more than his two predecessors, had arrived at the notion of making Jesus participate in the attributes of Jehovah.

VII. Upon the whole, the chief merit of Luke is that he was an industrious compiler: he made a large collection of stories concerning Christ, from what he had heard or found written, and put them into good Greek for the use of Theophilus. But such a work, however well-written and interesting, does not add much to the evidence for the facts themselves; less indeed than Mark's; for he was a follower of Peter, an eye-witness; whilst Luke only accompanied Paul, who himself must have learned what he knew of the history of Jesus from the original eye-witnesses, and perhaps partly from hearsay. Moreover, Luke does not say that he himself learned his facts from eye-witnesses, which he probably would have done if he could; since that, at least, was necessary to set his pretensions on a level with those of the writers before him. His assertion that "he had perfect understanding of all things from the first," he must be aware, would procure to his work less authority than if he could have said that he had his information from Peter, or Andrew, or James. But since it appears that he borrowed chiefly from previous writings,\* or adopted existing traditions, the phrase was as

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\* Schleiermacher, although he does not admit that Luke copied from Matthew and Mark, says of him, "He is, from beginning to end, no more

recommendatory an one as could be adopted consistently with truth.

VIII. The book of the Acts is a more orderly narrative, and in this the talent of Luke as a clear and forcible narrator seems to have more free play. In the first part many chasms and abrupt transitions occur, similar to those in his Gospel; but when the writer comes to his own times, and the transactions in which he bore a part, he becomes clear and precise as to time and place. Moreover, in this latter part, the narrative contains a lesser proportion of miracles, and those mostly such as might easily be resolved into ordinary events miraculized by the imagination.\* The style of the narrative shows that the writer was a zealous adherent of the church, a believer in its miraculous pretensions, and therefore not disposed to examine very rigidly stories favourable to the Christian cause. In this book, he falls into the style of Josephus, Herodotus, and most ancient historians, in embellishing his story with suitable speeches. The reverence with which the sayings of Jesus were recorded, probably restrained Luke to the mere reporting of such fragments as he could collect, or nearly so; but in the Acts, he introduces numerous formal speeches. Amongst others, one of Gamaliel bears strong evidence of being Luke's own composition, since it is impossible that a doctor of the law,† in the year A. D. 34 or 37, could say that Theudas rose up before his days, when, ac-

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than the compiler and arranger of documents which he found in existence."  
—*Crit. Essay*, p. 313.

\* In the last thirteen chapters of the Acts, the miracles recorded are, the vision of the man of Macedonia; the casting out of the spirit of divination; the earthquake at Philippi; Paul's cures at Ephesus: the revival of Eutychus; the prophecy of Agabus; Paul's prediction of the storm; the viper at Melita; the cure of Publius's father and others.

† Ludovicus Capellus places the speech of Gamaliel at the beginning of Caligula's reign (viz. A. D. 37); Whitby, and others, in the twentieth of Tiberius (A. D. 34). The history itself purports that it was not long after Christ's death.

cording to Josephus,\* Theudas did not rise up till the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus, or not before A. D. 44; although it was very natural that Luke, an inhabitant of Antioch, writing in the year A. D. 71 or 72, should forget the dates of some of the Judean insurrections, and attribute such a speech to Gamaliel for want of knowing what was said; for, according to his account, the council was a secret one.†

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Thus it appears that the first three Gospels were written at a considerable distance of time from the transactions recorded; that it is not improbable, although not certain, that there may be some parts which the writers learned direct from the apostles or other eye-witnesses; but that it is uncertain which these parts are, and that there is reason to believe that they are largely mingled with second-hand narrations, hearsay, and traditions which had passed through several stages.

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\* "Whilst Fadus was procurator of Judea, a certain impostor, called Theudas, persuaded a very great multitude, taking their effects with them, to follow him to the river Jordan; for he said he was a prophet, and that, causing the river to divide, he would give them a passage. By these speeches he deceived many, but Fadus sent out a troop of horse, who slew many, and took many prisoners. They cut off the head of Theudas, and brought it to Jerusalem. These things happened in Judea, while Cuspius Fadus was procurator."—Jos. Ant. xx. cap. 5, 1. Fadus was sent as procurator after the death of Herod Agrippa. A. D. 44.

† The best vindication that Lardner can find for Luke is, that there must have been two Theudas, and that Josephus must have omitted the first (vol. i. p. 425). But it is not likely that so minute an historian should have omitted any notable attempt at insurrection; and the speech implies that it was so, by classing it with that of Judas of Galilee (A. D. 6 or 7). The very grossness of Luke's blunder, in placing Theudas *before* Judas, that is, about forty years wrong, has been used as an argument that he could not have committed it. But events in any country might easily become misplaced by half a century in the mind of a foreigner. It would not be surprising to find a Frenchman so inaccurate in his remembrance of English history as to imagine that the Manchester massacre occurred before Lord George Gordon's riots.



The many agreements between the three are not in general of that kind which proceeds from several independent eye-witnesses narrating the same fact, because they borrowed from each other, or repeated the same current traditions.

Le Clerc, indeed, said, "They seem to think more justly, who say that the first three evangelists were unacquainted with each other's design. In that way greater weight accrues to their testimony. When witnesses agree who have first laid their heads together, they are suspected." And Lardner adds, "I have all my days read and admired the first three evangelists, as independent witnesses; and I know not how to forbear ranking the other opinion among those bold as well as groundless assertions,\* in which critics too often indulge themselves, without considering the consequences." Nevertheless, if it be allowed that the assertion has been shown to be well grounded, the consequences, whatever they be, must be admitted.

To ascertain precisely the degree in which each evangelist was indebted to his predecessors, or to the same fixed traditions, is interesting, but not of the first importance; because in either case the value of the agreement in establishing the credibility of the narrative is very much diminished.

It is undeniable that the repetition of Matthew's statements, by writers so near to him in time, and who had access to some of the original eye-witnesses, does, in some measure, confirm those statements; and the more so, as Mark and Luke appear to have exercised some discretion in the selec-

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\* The objections of Lardner are, that no Christian writers before Augustine appear to have supposed that the first three evangelists had seen each other's Gospels; that it was not suitable to the character of any of the evangelists to transcribe another historian; that there would have appeared no need to repeat things already written; that there are many seeming contradictions and numberless small varieties in the three, also some omissions, and some things peculiar to each. See *Hist. of Apost.*, chap. x.



tion. Therefore, there is a strong probability that the accor-  
dant portions of these three histories contain a tolerably  
correct outline of the chief events of Christ's life ; but some  
errors and embellishments might also find their way into all  
three by the same channels, viz. the mistakes or inventions  
of the first writer, or the traditions on which they all de-  
pended. In the case of miracles in particular, it is to be  
considered whether the same motives which led the first  
evangelist to exaggerate or to receive exaggerations, might  
not have led men circumstanced so similarly to himself as  
Mark and Luke were, to repeat a part of his statements.  
They have shaken Matthew's general credibility by rejecting  
some of his most prominent miracles ; and it may be ques-  
tioned whether their own position, as men of the same views  
and feelings, and defenders of the same cause, enables them  
to add from their own credibility what they have taken from  
him, in the case of the miracles which they confirm.

It might be said that after admitting so much against the  
credibility of the evangelists, it is inconsistent to receive their  
testimony at all, or to pretend to gather from them any truth  
regarding the history of Christ. But this would be a contrary  
extreme. It is of the very nature of history to contain much  
incorrectness, since it must depend more or less on a series of  
links of human testimony. Therefore to ascertain the truth  
of remote historical facts is a peculiarly difficult attempt,  
although not altogether hopeless ; and if the object be con-  
sidered worth the pains, the inquirer must submit to the  
trouble of sifting narrations, of making allowance for mis-  
takes, ignorance, and peculiar biases, and in many cases be  
content to retain a very small grain of reality from the midst  
of a mass of invention. So in these three Gospels, after  
making every allowance for probable mistake and fiction, and  
especially of such a kind as would tend to aggrandize the

founder of the sect, there still seems to remain so much of reality, that the attempt of Jesus to assume the Messiahship, his public preaching in Galilee and at Jerusalem, and his crucifixion, might be considered, from the testimony of these three writers alone, as facts deserving a place in history ; which conclusion is strongly supported by other writings and subsequent events.

## CHAPTER VI.

ON THE DATE AND CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL OF  
ST. JOHN.

THE first three Gospels agree very well in the style of the discourses attributed to Christ, which are chiefly parables and short pithy sayings. They represent him as beginning his public preaching in Galilee, proceeding after some time to Jerusalem, and suffering there. The chief topic dwelt upon is the approach of the kingdom of heaven; and they contain much concerning the fall of Jerusalem.

But the Gospel of John is of a very different character. The discourses of Christ are here long controversial orations without any parables: he is made to journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, and back again, many times; the kingdom of heaven is nearly lost sight of; the fall of Jerusalem never alluded to; and we have, instead of these, several new subjects, viz. the incarnation of the word or *logos* in the person of Christ; his coming down from heaven; his relationship to the Father; and the promise of the Comforter or Holy Spirit. Also, with few exceptions, a new set of miracles is attributed to Christ.

From the resemblance of style, the author of this Gospel and of the three Epistles appears to be the same. In the first Epistle, he says, that he had been an eye-witness of the word of life. In the last two he calls himself "the elder." There was a John, usually called the elder or presbyter, to distinguish him from John the Apostle, the brother of James;

and Papias\* calls him also "a disciple of Jesus." But the name "elder" was not uncommonly given to the heads of the church (1 Peter v. 1), and might be assumed by John the Apostle. In the Gospel, the writer is said to be the disciple whom Jesus loved. That this is the same as the brother of James is confirmed by this, that the other three Evangelists often name this John among the more confidential disciples of Jesus; whilst the other John, the presbyter mentioned by Papias, does not appear at all. And since the church in general has attributed this Gospel to John the Apostle, there seems to be sufficient reason to believe that he and the beloved disciple were the same. Consequently, this Gospel contains what is equivalent to an assertion that it was written by the Apostle John, and thus differs from the rest in stating its author.

There is no external evidence before Irenæus (178), who said, "afterwards, i. e. after Luke wrote, John the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon his breast, likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia." Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, also speak of this as the last-written Gospel. There are several passages in the Fathers before Irenæus, having the appearance of quotations from or allusions to the Gospel and the 1st Epistle, viz. Hermas, A. D. 100; Ignatius, 107; Polycarp, 108. The result most generally agreed upon, is the date of 97 or 98 for the Gospel.†

We find in ch. xxi. 24, as follows, "this (the beloved disciple) is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and *we* know that his testimony is true." Grotius conjectures that "we" meant the church at Ephesus.

\* Euseb. H. E, l. 3, c. 29.

† Mill, Fabricius, Le Clerc, and Jones, are for 97 or 98. Lardner "does not presume to say exactly the year, but thinks it might be written in the year 68."



In this case, the chapter in question, and therefore probably the whole Gospel,\* does not come before us strictly as the writing of St. John, but rather as the report of what he wrote, given by some member or members of the Ephesian church. The Gospel has the appearance rather of a collection of detached writings and discourses than of a continuous work; and it seems highly probable that some other person than the aged Apostle himself should have been employed to put these together and transcribe them. And whether this compiler, transcriber, or amanuensis, may not have been so zealous as to add not only the last chapter, but also in some other parts to improve somewhat upon the Apostle's own words, is difficult to determine. Yet the general identity of the style is an argument that such liberties could not have been very extensive.

II. The later date of this Gospel would account in a great measure for the difference between its tone and sentiments and those of the other three. After so long an interval from the fall of Jerusalem, the expectation of an immediate coming of the Son of Man had become comparatively faint; the political character of the Messiah as a Jewish deliverer was nearly obsolete; and the investing him with the attributes suggested by the Alexandrian Platonic philosophy, was a theme much more intelligible and interesting to the Greeks, perhaps also the philosophic Jews at Ephesus. The Apostle having been resident there for many years,† would naturally become conversant with the prevalent habits of thinking and speaking amongst the philosophical and religious world around him; to which indeed the habitual respect of the Jews of

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\* All the evidence from manuscripts confirms the argument derived from the style, that the last chapter is a genuine part of the Gospel.

† The time when John came to Ephesus cannot be ascertained, but the opinions vary from A. D. 60 to 70. The chief datum is that he probably did not go there till *after* Paul had been there and written his epistle.

Palestine for their more learned brethren at Alexandria would have already predisposed him. Hence, although at first a partaker of the common expectations relative to the Jewish Messiah, he would be disposed to modify his notions according to the progress of events, to leave comparatively out of sight the political peculiarity which had always been a dangerous one, as affording ground for the charge of sedition, and was now of minor interest; and to set forth the religion and its founder in a light calculated to render both most honourable in the view of his hearers of another region and almost another age. The title "King of Israel" is not entirely forgotten; but the "Saviour of the world" is the more favourite appellation of Jesus in this Gospel.

This Gospel appears accordingly to be the attempt of a half-educated but zealous follower of Jesus, to engraft his conceptions of the Platonic philosophy upon the original faith of the disciples. The divine wisdom, or logos, or light, proceeding from God, of which so much had been said in the Alexandrian school, he tells us became a man or flesh in the person of Jesus, dwelt for a time on earth, and ascended up where he was before, and where he had been from the beginning, into the bosom of the Father. The title "Son of God," applied by the Jews to the expected Messiah, but by the Platonists to the world itself, and afterwards to the logos, affords him another point of amalgamation; and a term which had been understood by the Jews probably merely in the sense of election or adoption, as in the case of David, is by him put forth as indicating a more sublime and mysterious union. Consequently, this Gospel shows throughout a double or Christiano-Platonic object; first to prove that Jesus is the Christ, which was common to all the Apostles, and secondly that the Christ is the Son of God or logos which descended from heaven to give light to men.

The essential faith he consequently puts in the simple form, believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and repeats this urgently as of primary necessity for salvation, viii. 24; xi. 26; xiv. 1; xx. 31. "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." This limitation of the essential belief to the Messiahship of Jesus is in accordance with the representation of Christianity given by Paul, who had preached before John in the same place and probably to many of the same hearers: viz.—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. x. 9. The shade of difference is in the distinguishing attribute of the Messiah; in Paul's view it is his resurrection; in John's, his being the Word or *logos*. It is probable, moreover, that Paul urged the sufficiency of faith in Jesus in opposition to the supposed necessity of keeping the Jewish law; John, in opposition to the dogmas of rising heresies. But the absence of any declaration on this point in countries where Paul had preached, indicates that John also had relinquished or much relaxed his Mosaism; and the want even of allusion to the subject might proceed from its having grown comparatively out of date.

III. Whilst the first three Gospels have principally an historical or narrative aim, viz. to give an account of the acts and sayings of Jesus, the object of the last is mainly an argumentative or controversial one, i. e. to enforce doctrines, supply arguments, and answer objections; and this more with reference to the position and thoughts of the Ephesians in the year 97, than to those of the inhabitants of Judea in the time of Pilate. It is true that there is to some extent a blending of both stages of thought, and that the

Apostle preserves probably some portion of the realities which had passed within or near his time 66 years previously. Thus his description of the notions of the priests, xi. 47, 48, their fear lest Jesus should occasion the total subversion of their state by the Romans, carries us back to the original transactions, and would be almost unintelligible unless compared with the other Gospels. In some places, as in the account of the crucifixion, he continues his narrative for a time as if without other motive than the interest of the subject. The texts quoted below are amongst some which bear strongly the appearance of being historical relics.\* But in most chapters narrative forms but a small part, and has generally the subsidiary office of supplying occasion for the delivery of a doctrine. The events seem to be selected and arranged merely in order to give occasion for a miracle, or a declaration of faith.† The answers or objections in the dialogues are evidently inserted to conduce to

\* I. 19. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him (John), Who art thou?

I. 24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

I. 44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

II. 18. Then answered the Jews, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

III. 23. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.

VI. 15. When Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king.

VI. 30. What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?

VII. 5. For neither did his brethren believe in him.

X. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

X. 24. If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. (Compare Matt. xvi. 20.)

XI. 47—50. Council of the Pharisees, and advice of Caiaphas.

XI. 54. Retreat of Jesus to Epharaim.

XIX. 12. If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend.

† See i. 46—49, the meeting with Nathaniel and his speedy confession, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." II. 1—10, the marriage-feast; xi. the whole story of Lazarus.



the effect of the sentence which Jesus is to utter.\* And both friends and opponents usually make Christian admissions as full as the most zealous believer could desire; much more certainly than the degree of acquaintance with Jesus, or other circumstances implied in the story would appear to warrant.†

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\* See iv. 9—26. Conversation with the woman of Samaria; whose ignorance of the meaning of living water, as well as her uncalled-for suggestion of the difference between Jewish and Samaritan worship, and her spontaneous mention of Messiah, all give happy occasions for uttering some important points of Christian faith, agreeing with the state of ideas when John wrote. See also ver. 33. The inability of the disciples to comprehend the nature of the meat of which Jesus speaks, although expressed very historically, is evidently introduced to give effect to the next verse. VI. 7, 9. Philip and Andrew fully state the difficulty which the miracle of the loaves was to meet. VI. 34. The Jews with much simplicity continue to petition for bread; and viii. 52, cannot perceive that "never tasting death" may cover a sense different from natural death. XI. 12. The disciples show the same artificial ignorance as to the sense conveyed by the word "sleep."

† I. 29. As soon as John the Baptist sees Jesus, he says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." According to Matt. xi. 3, his faith at a much later date was not so far advanced as to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ. And from Acts xviii. 25, it seems very doubtful whether John the Baptist and his sect did ever confess so much of Jesus. Ver. 34, John adds his record, that "this is the Son of God;" in 35, 36, repeats his saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." If the Baptist had been in the habit of giving such ample and frequent testimony in favour of Christ, how could his fervent disciple Apollos and the disciples of Ephesus have needed conversion to faith in Jesus, by so tardy a medium as Paul's preaching? Acts xix. 3—5. But if John the Baptist be represented as believing fully at the mere sight of Jesus, his hearers are no less prompt in partaking of his belief. Andrew finds his brother Simon, and says, "We have found the Messiah." i. 41. Nathanael's ample confession, ver 49, has but a slender basis in the indications of prophetic knowledge ascribed to Jesus, viz. his calling him an Israelite without guile, and his seeing him under the fig-tree. The Samaritans, who at a much later period, according to Luke, would not even receive Jesus into their villages, here are not only easily converted, but give an open confession, "we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." iv. 42. However satisfactory this confession might sound in the preaching at Ephesus, it is probably more than Jesus would have wished for at that time, when he had not yet taken the resolution to proclaim himself openly. (See Matt. xvi. 20.) When Jesus retreats beyond Jordan, (John x. 41,) the many who resort to him

Chronological order and historical accuracy were therefore of but little importance to the writer; and if, as seems probable from the abruptness with which some passages begin, (ii. 13; iii. 1; viii. 1; xv. 1;) this Gospel consists of parts delivered by preaching or writing at different times, the order was still more likely to be neglected. Add to which, that the distance of time must have tended to confuse irretrievably the remembrances of both facts and order. Consequently this Gospel presents some notable discrepancies with the other three. For instance:

II. 13. Jesus comes up to Jerusalem, and drives the buyers and sellers from the temple, soon after his baptism, and before his public preaching in Galilee. The other three place this in his last visit, and make it appear that this illegal act contributed to the determination of the council to apprehend him. This harmonizes so much better with the whole history, that it seems more reasonable to suppose that John's disregard of chronology could extend to this degree, or that his compiler has to such a degree mal-arranged his discourses,\* than to reject the concurrent voice of his predecessors.

V. 1. Jesus comes up a second time to Jerusalem, before the feeding of the five thousand, of which visit no notice is taken in Matthew, who first mentions the intention of Jesus to go up to Jerusalem *after* that miracle. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he

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give a convenient attestation to the writer's report of John the Baptist's testimony, "all things that John spake of this man were true," although we cannot conceive how any Jews at that time could have had the means of arriving at the conclusion that Jesus was "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world," or even of understanding the phrase. The Pharisees, xi. 47, and Pilate, xviii. 38, are made to say all that the Christians could desire from them; "this man doeth many miracles," and "I find in him no fault at all."

\* The passage ii. 13—25 might very well have been originally a separate narrative.

must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things, &c.” Matt. xvi. 21. This does not agree with the supposition that Jesus had already been twice to Jerusalem since the beginning of his public preaching. It would not be impossible, although from the current of the story unnatural, to suppose that a journey to Jerusalem unnoticed by the writer of Matthew, took place in the interval between some of the events recorded by him since the arrival of Jesus in Galilee; and in this case, he must have given a version of the discourse in question conformable to his own erroneous impression. But since the chapter in John forms a complete isolated story, it is perhaps more probable that this visit was the same as some other, perhaps the following one in ch. vii.,\* and that the mode of collocation has given the appearance of two successive visits.

VII. 1. Another visit to Jerusalem not noticed by Matthew, Mark, or Luke. The date is given (feast of tabernacles,) and from this time John does not bring Jesus again into Galilee, but to the further side of Jordan. Hence it becomes necessary to intercalate this visit in Matt. xix. 1, “He departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan;” an ellipse certainly inadmissible except on the supposition that the compiler of Matthew endeavoured to give the form of consecutive narration to imperfect fragments.

In some minor instances the story in John clashes more decidedly with that in the others. He excludes entirely the legend of the forty days’ temptation by saying that Jesus went into Galilee the second day after his baptism, and that he was at Cana on the third day; whereas the others say that immediately after his baptism he remained forty days in the wilderness. He represents Jesus as calling Simon and

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\* The marks of time do not disagree. This latter visit took place at the time of the feast of tabernacles; the former during a feast of the Jews.



Andrew whilst John was still baptizing, i. 40, 41, and near Bethabara beyond Jordan; Matthew places the first call of those two disciples both at a different time and a different place, viz. after John was cast into prison, and at the sea of Galilee, iv. 18.\* See also the date of the supper at Bethany, John xii. 1—8, compared with Matt. xxvi. 2—12.

To endeavour to reconcile John with his predecessors on the hypothesis, that all four wrote invariably true and correct history, is evidently hopeless. The discrepancies are so far important as to lead us inevitably to infer that in some of them, and probably in all four, there is a large measure of that incorrectness which proceeds from imperfect knowledge, forgetfulness, or neglect. In the case of John, they are to such an extent as to show that neither he nor his compiler paid much regard to the Gospels of his predecessors, or used them as a guide in forming a new one. An Apostle indeed could not be expected sedulously to frame his discourses so as to agree with the works of previous compilers, if he had known them; but a disregard of them, allowing of manifest contradictions, implies either that those works were but little known in his church, or that they had not yet become standards of authority.

It has been supposed that John wrote to supply the deficiencies in his predecessors. But there is no trace of such an intention; in some places he narrates at much length the same incidents, and in his statement of his design, xx. 30, 31, makes no allusion to them. He tells us, xxi. 25, how numerous were the books which had been written concerning Jesus, but there is no distinctive notice of our three first Gospels.

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\* Although the facts in Matthew's story do not exclude the possibility of a previous acquaintance between Jesus and the two disciples, the mode of expression evidently implies that the writer considered this to be the commencement of their discipleship.



Yet although the discrepancies imply at least partial error, they are not such as to invalidate entirely the history either of Matthew or of John in their main features. Jesus doubtless, like all the Jews, made frequent visits to Jerusalem on the occasion of the feasts; perhaps several after the Baptist began to preach: and John, for some reason which we cannot discover,\* has selected these visits as his chief incidents, whilst Matthew preserved chiefly what happened in Galilee. Making allowance for some mistakes and transpositions in both, a great part of the incidents in John and Matthew harmonize.† And this not only in portions of narrative obviously corresponding, John i. 23, 42, vi. 5—14, 16—20, 30, xii. 1—8, xviii., xix.; and in some relics of sayings, iv. 35, 38, 44, xiii. 16, 20; (agreeing with Matt. ix. 37, xiii. 57, Luke x. 24, Matt. x. 24, 40;) but in some instances which appear to have the force of undesigned coincidence. Compare

John ii. 18. with Matt. xii. 38. demand of a sign.

19. „ xxvi. 61. destroying the temple.

iv. 1. „ iv. 12. motive for departure into Galilee.

vi. 69. „ xvi. 16. confession of Peter.

vii. 5—9. „ xvii. 22. the abode still in Galilee.

xii. 19. „ xxi. 46. Pharisees' fear of the multitude.

xviii. 1. „ xxvi. 30. Kedron and mount of Olives.

\* Possibly because John, having for a principal object to give controversial dialogues with the Jews, inclined to prefer the temple as the scene, rather than the villages and mountains of Galilee.

† If John iv. 1, be admitted to coincide with Matt. iv. 12; John vii. 1—x. 39, to be passed over in Matt. xix. 1, the two seem in many things to support each other. But John vi. 4, has frustrated my attempt to obtain the duration of Christ's ministry. The very different conclusions which are come to on this point, from 1 to 3 years, seem to arise from the greater or less degree of exactness which commentators think it necessary to attribute to John.

John has, in common with his predecessors, the prophetic testimony of the Baptist in favour of Jesus, i. 15, 26, 27; the descent of the Spirit as a dove upon Jesus, i. 32; the feeding of the 5000, vi. 5—14; Jesus walking upon the sea, vi. 16—20; the foretelling of the treachery of Judas, xiii. 21—26; and of the denial by Peter, xiii. 36—38. The insertion of these stories in John, whilst he has passed over so many others, affords some additional argument that to these there might be a basis of reality. Some of them are related by John in terms so nearly agreeing with those in the others, that it seems probable either that his mode of narration was influenced by the very traditions which the others had adopted, or that he himself had been the source of those traditions.

IV. The additional miracles in this Gospel are mostly of a more bold and marvellous character than those in the others. They are generally represented as performed in the most public manner, without the injunctions to secrecy so frequent in the first three Gospels. The conversion of water into wine, according to this Gospel, was the beginning of the miracles of Jesus, and “manifested forth his glory:” it is strange that none of the other histories should hint at it, and that it should first appear in a writing of the year 97. He says that an angel went down at certain seasons into the pool of Bethesda, as if here recording not a popular notion, but a fact which he means to be believed as much as the rest of the story.\* He gives us the raising of Lazarus in open day near Jerusalem, the people coming out to meet Jesus on that account,

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\* The genuineness of ver. 3, 4, containing the descent of the angel, has been disputed; but Bretschneider, *Probabilia*, p. 68, gives strong reasons for believing that they were written by the author of John, as well as the rest of the story. In Tertullian's time there was no trace of the pool remaining; he wrote therefore that after the coming of Christ *its efficacy ceased*. *De Baptismo*, c. 5.

and Lazarus himself eating and drinking in public ; whilst none of the preceding writers make any allusion either to this astonishing miracle itself, or to its consequences. And as if to supply the most convincing attestation possible of the divine mission of his master, he tells us that at Jerusalem, before the people, whilst Jesus was praying, a voice came from the sky to answer him, xii. 28.

Admitting the greater part of this Gospel to have been written or dictated by St. John, about the year 97, for the use of the Ephesian church, we have still no guarantee of the Apostle's veracity or correctness of memory. At that time he must have been nearly 100 years old : his other writings show that he possessed a vivid imagination and strong feelings ; and it is well known that such persons are apt to mingle truth and falsehood in their narratives even unintentionally. But the Apostle was also under the strongest temptation to indulge in fiction. He had been personally attached to Jesus, and believed him to be the Messiah. After the death of his Master, the Apostle's station in the church prompted him to take a prominent part in spreading the common belief. Interest and ambition, as well as private friendship and religious zeal, urged John to be a strenuous preacher of Jesus the Messiah. If any of the brethren were pressed too hard by unbelievers concerning the proof of the Messiahship of the carpenter's son, it was natural to look to the confidential followers of Jesus himself for assistance. These found it not so easy to convince others as themselves ; for the impression made by the life and character of Jesus could not be easily condensed into an argument fit to oppose to objectors, and the proofs from prophecy appeared to dispassionate observers far-fetched and doubtful. The assertion of his miracles of healing and casting out demons was also liable to objections, since others had pretended to the same

powers. Hence the temptation continually to adopt or invent fresh stories of miracles, which might serve in the controversy as more indubitable proofs of a divine mission. In proportion to the distance of time and place from the scene of the original transactions, this species of imposition became more easy. Accordingly, we find but few allusions to miracles in the Epistles; abundant accounts of them in the four Gospels; and in this last Gospel, published much later than the others, and at Ephesus, bolder and more gross stories of miracles, as well as more confident appeals to them, than in any other. The Apostle had been for sixty-four years accustomed to hear exaggerated and fictitious accounts of the acts of Christ, and could not but observe their efficacy in promoting the faith of the church. For, since he puts this saying into the mouth of Christ, (John iv. 48,) "Unless ye see wonders and signs, ye will not believe," we may infer that he himself found it necessary to supply his hearers at least with *narratives* of such wonders and signs. And at that distance of time, amongst the strangers of Ephesus, there was no one capable of controverting his statements.

The temptation to fiction on the part of the Apostle was of the strongest kind. All additional lustre thrown upon the person of Jesus was reflected upon him, the beloved disciple, a chief apostle, and leader in the church. The purest sentiments arising from friendship and reverence for his master, would also prompt him to seize all opportunities of doing him honour; and who can assure us that the Apostle did not partake so far of the imperfections of human nature as, in some instances, to overlook the character of the means for the attainment of a good end? Historical veracity would not appear to him of the chief importance. "He only is a liar who denieth Jesus to be the Christ," 1 Epist. ii. 22. He does not even pretend that his Gospel was written in order



to give a correct history of Jesus, but he says, "these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." xx. 31. To communicate this, his own sincere belief, to others, was his main object; and the stress which he laid upon it is visible throughout his writings. iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life." vi. 69; viii. 24; ix. 35; xi. 15, 27; 1 Epist. v. 13.

There is an important consideration which establishes some difference between the fictions of this writer and ordinary cases of false testimony. It is, that he supposed himself to be writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit. xiv. 16—18, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." 26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." xv. 26, 27, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." He believed, therefore, that the Holy Spirit, which was given after Jesus was glorified and become invisible (vii. 39), was his representative and the organ of communication with his disciples; consequently that whatever was suggested by the Holy Spirit might be regarded as Jesus's own words. On this principle he would even consider the dictates of the Holy Spirit since

the death of Jesus as of equal authority with the words spoken by Jesus when he was with them, or in the beginning. And if we allow that this writer, like many others, was liable to consider the offspring of his own imagination as the dictates of the Holy Spirit, it was natural that he should attribute to Jesus his own views and opinions without any consciousness of fraud ; for the distinction of the time at which the sentiment was first uttered would appear comparatively unimportant. The most dispassionate historians are apt to introduce their own views into the discourses they record ; much more would this be the case with a zealous defender of a church, interested in the controversies of his time, and believing himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover this habit, of following his own imagination as the voice of the Holy Spirit, might extend to his narrative of facts. For it is well known that a strong bias will lead people almost unconsciously to distort and invent facts ; and, with such an earnest purpose as the writer had to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, he might not only mingle truth with falsehood unintentionally, but even fall into the persuasion that the Holy Spirit permitted such additions and improvements as he could not but know to be fictitious, but which seemed necessary to produce the desired effect upon his hearers.

The following texts indicate that his statements were not implicitly received by all in his own time. iii. 11, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness." 32, "What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony." The strong asseveration of his veracity, when relating that blood and water issued from the wound in the side of Jesus (xix. 35), affords presumption that his assertions frequently met with considerable opposition. See also 1 Epist. iv. 6, "We are of God ; he that knoweth God, heareth us ; he that

is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

V. The discourses attributed to Jesus are so similar in style to John's own Epistles, and so dissimilar to those of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, that it is difficult to consider them as faithful reports. Instead of uttering short fragments, the form in which real sayings were most likely to be preserved, the Jesus of this Gospel usually holds sustained dialogues, or delivers long orations, sometimes of several chapters, and always in the very remarkable style of the writer himself. In ch. v. 18, the Jews seek to kill Jesus, upon which he makes a discourse of thirty verses on the authority given to the Son by the Father. In the answer to Nicodemus, iii. 11, Jesus is made to say, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness." The writer himself very often introduces this protestation; but here it is unmeaning in the mouth of Jesus, since he was then only beginning his ministry, and Nicodemus was come expressly to receive his witness. And in the same speech Jesus is made to say several sentences agreeing almost literally with some in John's Epistle.\* A little further on, John the Baptist speaks also very closely in the style of the same

\* John iii. 16. (speech to Nicodemus.) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1 Epistle iv. 9. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

V. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Epistle.\* When Jesus was brought before Pilate, the other Evangelists relate, that, after admitting that he was King of the Jews, he answered nothing; but John makes him converse very freely with Pilate on the nature of his kingdom; and at ver. 11, ch. xix. he tells him that Judas, of whom Pilate knew nothing, was more sinful than he. In ch. xii. 32, Jesus says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;" and the people, by their answer, appear at once to understand that lifting up signified his death. Moreover Jesus is represented as calling the people or multitude "the Jews,"† a mode of expression very unnatural to himself, a Jew speaking to Jews, but quite natural to one writing at Ephesus long after the admission of the Gentiles. (See xiii. 33; x. 34; xviii. 20; vii. 19; viii. 56.) These, and numerous other instances, show so little care on the part of the writer to put into the mouth of Jesus expressions suitable to the time and circumstances described, that it appears most likely that he only expected these discourses to be received as his own interpretation of Christ's doctrine. We feel that it is the Evangelist himself speaking, rather than reporting; that the Jews, the disciples, and Jesus himself, in most places afford the *dramatis personæ*, and his

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\* John iii. 36. (John the Baptist.)  
He that believeth on the Son hath  
everlasting life; and he that believeth  
not the Son shall not see life; but the  
wrath of God abideth on him.

See above. 1 Epist. v. 12. He that  
hath the Son hath life; and he that  
hath not the Son of God hath not  
life.

† The absurdity of this term, as we find it applied in John, does not seem to constitute an invincible objection to the authenticity of the Gospel, if we consider the probable long residence of John in Asia Minor, and the habit which many persons have of accommodating their mode of expression to the ideas which they are conscious exist in the minds of their hearers, rather than to their own knowledge. In the Acts, the chief opponents of the church were "the Jews," and by the time of John, the minor distinctions of Jewish sects had become still more completely superseded by the one grand distinction in the eyes of the church, of opposition to the name of Jesus. It is to be observed that he does sometimes introduce "the Pharisees," &c., when he leaves the controversial for the narrative style.



recollections of events and places in Judea, the scenery, for conveying lessons to his little children in the Church.

VI. This Gospel, more than any other, exhibits the characteristics of the writer himself; and they do not disagree with what we know of the apostle John historically: a Galilean fisherman who when very young left all to follow Jesus, the favourite disciple of his master, subsequently one of chief authority in the church, introduced to philosophical speculations to which he had not been formally educated, and, at the time this Gospel was published, probably the last venerable remnant of the college of apostles. He is earnest and eloquent, but illogical and rambling; his dicta follow one another frequently without any obvious connexion, and without any bearing upon the point in question. Like many men more indebted to feeling than to reason for their eloquence, he answers objections, not by pertinent facts and arguments, but with a flow of his own favourite ideas.\* He is authoritative and frequently dignified; but sometimes dogmatical, harsh, and free in the use of spiritual menaces. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." iii. 36.† The patient and elaborate argumentation of Paul was unsuited to his different intellectual power; he enforces his point by vehemence and repetition more than by reasoning, like one relying upon his apostolic infallibility and impatient of opposition.‡ He aspires continually after the most

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\* See discourse with Nicodemus, iii. In reply to the question of Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" (being born again) Jesus (or the writer) reproves his ignorance, asserts the value of his own testimony, asks how he will believe if he tells him heavenly things, says the Son of Man must be lifted up like the Serpent, that believing in the Son brings eternal life, and finally leaves the question unanswered. iii. 31—36, have no connexion with the question of purifying which occasions the speech of the Baptist. See also vi. 42—65, vii. 27—29, viii. 22—26, xiv. 5, 6.

† See also viii. 44, 55; x. 8, 26.

‡ VIII. 47; 1 Epist. iv. 6; 2 Epist. 10; 3 Epist. 10.

sublime abstractions in the manner of the philosophical schools; but intermixes tales and dialogues in the Rabbinical style. He seeks to accommodate his language to the ideas of his hearers,\* but his whole work is replete with Hebraical and Rabbinical phraseology and ideas,† as if his later acqui-

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\* I. 38, 41; iv. 25; vi. 1, 4; xix. 40.

† Tanchuma, fol. 61, 3. For there is no light except the life, as saith Proverbs xvi. 15, In the light of the king's countenance is life. Compare John i. 4.

Midrasch Ruth in Sohar Chadasch, fol. 67, 2. on Prov. xx. 27. The candle of the Lord is the soul of man. What doth the candle? It shineth in the darkness. Compare John i. 5.

Tanchuma, 57, 2. I will dwell (pitch my tent) in the midst of you. This expression applied to the Shechinah. Comp. John i. 14.

Debarim rabba, 2 fol. 251, 1. Joseph confessed his country . . . and he denied not, but said, &c. Sohar in Jalkut Rubeni, 145, 4. Jethro confessed, and lied not. A Jewish mode of assertion. Comp. John i. 20.

Jalkut Rubeni, 30, 4. The Messiah beareth the sins of the Israelites. John i. 29.

Sohar Genes. fol. 6. R. Eleazar and R. Abba meeting a celebrated teacher on his road, say to him, Behold thou wouldst not tell us thy name; where, I pray, is the place of thy dwelling? John i. 38.

A mark of holiness to pray in remote places, as under the fig-tree, rather than in public places. Breschith rabba, sect. 62, fol. 60, 3. R. Jose and his disciples rose in the morning, and studied under a fig-tree. John i. 49.

Chagigah, fol. 13, 1. A young man who makes a certain search before the time, is consumed by lightning, and the reason is given, "because his time was not yet come." John ii. 4.

Bamidbar rabba, fol. 238, 1. At that time, when Moses ascended into heaven, he heard the voice of God. John iii. 13.

To judge, κρίνειν, used frequently in Jewish writings, Talmud, &c., in the sense of condemning. John iii. 17.

To do the truth and to do a lie, for doing well or evil, a common Hebraism. Levit. xix. 35. Deut. xxv. 16. Jerem. viii. 10, &c. Midrasch in Jalkut Simeoni. Whosoever doeth the truth shall be firm, but he who doeth a lie shall not be strengthened. John iii. 21.

The friend of the bridegroom a regularly defined office among the Jews. John iii. 29.

Jalkut Rubeni, fol. 42, 2. Let a man beware of cultivating friendship with a Cuthæan (Samaritan). John iv. 9.

To drink of his waters, a common phrase for being his disciple. Chagiga, fol. 3, 1. They replied to R. Joshua, We are thy disciples, and we drink of thy waters. John iv. 14.

Sohar Chadasch, fol. 45, 1. Speaking of the times of the Messiah, From

tions had not been able to displace that style of thought and expression with which the schools of Judea had imbued him.

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that time the prayers of the Israelites will ascend to God from whatsoever place they are poured forth before the holy King. John iv. 21.

Psalm cxlv. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. John iv. 24.

Berachoth, fol. 43, 2. Among the six things forbidden to the disciples of wise men, is to talk with a woman in the public way. John iv. 27. (they wondered.)

Numb. xvi. 28. Moses says, I have not done these works of myself. John v. 30.

A common phrase in the Talmud; Rabbi N. came in the name of Rabbi N., i. e. he taught the things which he had heard from him. John v. 43.

Sohar Chadasch, 12, 3. We pray God to give us a son, who may do his work. John vi. 28.

Synopsis Sohar, p. 87. If any one desireth to attach himself to God, God taketh hold of him, nor letteth him go. John vi. 44.

Sohar Chadasch, 40, 4. When a man turneth to the Lord, he is filled as a fountain with living waters, and his streams go forth to men of every tribe. John vii. 38.

Many of the Rabbins considered it a profanation of the law to read it before the common people. John vii. 49.

Ketavoth, fol. 27, 1. A man speaking for himself is not believed. No man giveth testimony for himself. John viii. 13.

Sohar Numbers, 73, 291. Whosoever giveth labour to the law, he is free in all things. John viii. 32.

Avoda Sara, 10, 2. on Obad v. 18. These things are understood of those, who do the works of Esau. John viii. 39.

Sohar Chadasch, fol. 27, 3. The wicked are twice called "Sons of the old serpent, who slew Adam and all descending from him." John viii. 44.

Jevamoth, fol. 47, 1. R. Jehuda reproaches a person, As for thy words, thou art a Samaritan whose testimony is worth nothing with us. John viii. 48.

Sohar Chadasch, fol. 15, 2. We find no shepherd who layeth down his life for the flock, like Moses. John x. 11.

Midrasch Ruth in Sohar Chadasch, fol. 59, 2. This (disobedience) is the perverse path, which is called night. John xi. 10.

Breschith rabba, 94, 92, 3. It is better to slay one man than to injure a whole society. John xi. 50.

Men were supposed by the Jews to be elected to the office of prophet without regard to their inclinations or characters, as Balak. Jalkut Simeoni, part 2, fol. 98, 3. No one of the prophets knew what he prophesied, except Moses and Esaias. John xi. 51. (Caiaphas.)

Synopsis Sohar, p. 109, n. 2. In paradise are certain mansions for the

His Judaism in respect to the law of Moses is obscured by the preponderance of philosophic notions, and the more enlarged ideas which nearly all the Christians had admitted 30 years after the fall of Jerusalem. He is aware that the time was to come when neither at Mount Gerizim nor at Jerusalem alone men should worship the Father, and that Jesus was to have many sheep besides those of the first fold in Judea. He partakes even of the feeling which seems to have prevailed among the Christians of Asia Minor in Paul's time, that Judaism, which in many cases probably he merely personifies under the name of "the Jews," must now be considered an antagonist power to Jesus or Christianity. But traces of his early creed continually appear, and he frequently reverts from the more liberal Greek style of answering objections by counter-reasoning, to appeals to the authority of the law and the prophets v. 39; vii. 19. x. 35.\* As if conscious that the degree to which he carried the notion of an incarnation, "I and the Father are one," and "he who hath seen me hath seen

pious of the Gentiles, and for the kings of the world who do good to the Israelites. John xiv. 2.

Sohar Genes. 76, 299. R. Pinchas said: Before the righteous dieth, the bath kol exclaimeth thus to the righteous in paradise, Prepare a place for him who is coming. John xiv. 2.

Bammidbar rabba, sect 14, 223, 4. R. Jehoshua said: That generation is not fatherless, in which R. Eliezer son of Azariah liveth. John xiv. 18.

Criminal proceedings were distinguished by the Jews into three kinds; of *sin* or *crime*, when manifest sinners were condemned and punished; of *justice* or *righteousness*, when one unjustly accused was defended against oppression, attack, or false witness; of *judgment*, when the condemned party had to suffer what he had done to the other. John xvi. 8.

This is only a small specimen of the numerous instances collected by Lightfoot and Schoettgen, Horæ Heb. The subject is important as it tends to prove chiefly by means of latent Hebraisms, that this Gospel was written by one originally a Jew, notwithstanding some appearances to the contrary; and so far it adds to the probability of John's being the originator of it.

\* In the same Jewish spirit, iv. 5, 22; xii. 38—41.



the Father," sounded at variance with Hebrew ideas, he labours on this subject to apologize, explain, and reconcile, x. 33—36.\* There prevails however throughout a certain spirit of elevation proceeding from the mystic speculations of Platonism, which however perplexing and unintelligible, allured men to the exercise of their highest powers. The Galilean Platonist labours, amidst the difficulties of imperfect diction and inaccurate habits of reasoning, to express his conceptions that there are higher things before men than the common objects of sense, reaches from the more accessible or earthly doctrines to the more sublime or heavenly ones, and blending his glimpses of philosophic truth with zeal for his church and affection for his master, labours incessantly to prove that Jesus is the emanation of Deity, and therefore Deity itself, which gives light to the world and a higher life to men. With his controversial aim and exclusive attachments, it was not to be expected that he should admit any kindred or rival æons; the Greeks might proclaim Plato or Epicurus, and rival Jews Simon Magus, but in his view all besides Jesus were thieves and robbers: in him alone the Supreme Good, the Father appears visibly, and he alone is the light shining for a little time in the darkness which comprehendeth it not.

But it is when the writer descends into thoughts and feelings more common to humanity that his chief power is felt. His picture of Jesus bequeathing his parting benedictions to the disciples, seems fully to warrant the idea that the author is one whose imagination and affections had received an impress from real scenes and real attachments. The few relics of the words, looks, and acts of Jesus, which friendship itself could at that time preserve unmixed, he ex-

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\* The tone of the answer to Philip, xiv. 10, 11, implies that the oneness of Jesus with the Father was still to many a strange and imperfectly understood doctrine.

pands into a complete record of his own and the disciples' sentiments; what they felt he makes Jesus speak. The remembrance of their companion and master he represents as imparted to them by himself,—the peace given, not as the world giveth; and the whole of the recollections, suggestions, and influences, derived directly or indirectly from Jesus, which since his departure had formed the solace of the disciples and the main-stay of their faith, he identifies with the operation of the Holy Spirit, and embodies into the Comforter deputed by Jesus to represent him in his absence. To resolve all that he has felt into the operation of his own mind, would appear very strange and cold metaphysics to one of the school of Galilee; Jesus himself is to come to them and be seen by them in the Paraclete. xiv. 18, 19.

Looking rigidly at the merit of this Gospel in point of morality, it is perhaps as inferior to Matthew in this respect as it is superior in depth of feeling and pathos. There are few, if any, of those weighty moral lessons of universal acceptation which we find Jesus so frequently delivering elsewhere. To exalt and deify Jesus may be an office highly congenial to the feelings of a follower and friend; but it does not take the same rank with the inculcation of mercy and justice. This Gospel, if alone, would leave the impression that belief in Jesus as the Christ, and the recognition of the high offices which the writer labours to attribute to him, is the chief obligation laid upon man. The commandment to love one another is certainly enforced with much strength and pathos; but the commandment partakes too much of an exclusive spirit; it is for the Christian sect alone; it is not the language of wide philanthropy, "love all men;" but, "I pray not for the world, but for these whom thou hast given me out of the world."

To establish the pre-eminence and dignity of his master,

is the chief object of the writer. But he labours also to prove that the authority of Jesus was bequeathed by him to his apostles. "I have given them thy words, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," xvii. 14. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world," 18. The spiritual powers to be wielded by them, after the departure of the first Shepherd, were to be of the most ample kind. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," xvi. 23. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," xx. 23. There is some evidence that in the case of John as well as of Paul, this bold assertion of authority was not unneeded. The disciple was not above his master; and as Jesus had met with neglect or opposition in his life-time, so was John prevented by a Diotrophes, a Cerinthus, and the Nicolaitans, from enjoying, during his personal ministry in the church, that submissive homage so readily conceded to him when he had become no more than a venerable name.

It has been seen, that if John be admitted to be the author of this Gospel, whilst the hypothesis of real miracles be rejected, it becomes inevitable to charge the apostle with wilful fiction; or at least with allowing his imagination to take the place of his memory to such a degree as is nearly equivalent to it. And the degree and kind of moral excellence which we recognize in the work itself, by no means disagree with such a conclusion. On the contrary, zeal and affection for Jesus, combined with a tendency to sublime mysticism, were likely rather than otherwise to produce a habit of pious fraud in discoursing concerning him to others; which kind of discourse, by length of time, would become hardly distin-

guishable in the mind of the individual from more honest narration. There does not appear in this Gospel any of that high-toned morality which cultivates the love of abstract truth, apart from interest and feeling. This is to be sought for chiefly amongst the most philosophic as well as benevolent minds; and even amongst such it is perhaps not very common. But in an uneducated Galilean disciple—apparently of moderate intellect, deep feeling, and vivid imagination, a partizan among opponents, of a nation with whom religious fables and legends formed a favourite and important part of their literature—such a moral attainment must have excited our surprise; the absence of it can leave none.

The character of Jesus in this Gospel, with the exception of the parts where simple realities seem to break through, is perhaps on the whole less within the reach of our sympathies than in the preceding ones. In order to fulfil the objects of the writer, he is made to move and speak as a mystical and sublime personage, condescending to make a temporary sojourn in, rather than belonging to, this world. He seldom opens his mouth without conveying an intimation or direct assertion of his own high offices and nature. The perpetual and authoritative claim of adoration may be thought in this Gospel to overpower the spontaneous and pleasing homage which his character and precepts must more or less excite. This however was naturally regarded as an excellence rather than a defect by the church; and the Gospel of John has been, since the time of Origen, regarded with peculiar favour, as showing forth the divinity, whilst the others taught only the humanity, of the Christ.

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Since writing the above, I have read Bretschneider's *Probabilia*, which, as Credner says, comprises all that can be said against the authenticity of the Gospel of John. It is undoubtedly of great weight; and can only be



met by the supposition that the apostle had become in a great measure estranged from his earlier associations, and spoke or wrote much more with reference to the controversies of his time, than as an historian.

The chief objections of Bretschneider are :—The unsuitableness of the discourses of Jesus, the Baptist, and the Jews, and their extreme difference of character from those in the earlier Gospels :—Stories entirely fictitious, or an admixture of the fictitious with real incidents, such as show that he was neither a companion of Jesus, nor an eye-witness :—Ignorance of the geography, customs, and modes of thought of Judea, to such an extent as to show that the writer was not even a native of Palestine ; for instance, Sychar for Sichem, iv. 5—7 (this seems however satisfactorily answered by Credner) ; *Bethany* beyond Jordan, i. 28, in the best manuscripts as approved by Griesbach, and not *Bethabara*, which is a spurious emendation ; *Ænon* spoken of as a town, whilst it probably meant only fountains, iii. 23 ; *Siloam* falsely translated *sent*, ix. 7 ; the high priesthood apparently considered annual, xi. 49—52 ; the passover-supper placed a day wrong, if the other three are right, which difference might be explained by supposing the writer ignorant of the Jewish mode of beginning the day at 6 o'clock in the evening. The Gospel generally appears framed so as to meet the objections which are found in the mouths of Celsus, Trypho, and other opponents in the second century. The Apocalypse does not appear to be by the same writer as the Gospel, and moreover is not itself proved to be by John. The first epistle is from the same writer as the Gospel ; but the testimony from Papias, Polycarp, Irenæus, &c., is not sufficiently clear to prove that this was John, in the face of the above difficulties. The apparent quotations from the Gospel in Hermas, Ignatius, &c., might only be quotations from the same traditions.

Part of these objections, it is obvious, might be answered at the expense of the evangelist's historical fidelity. With respect to Judaisms, it will perhaps be thought by the students of Lightfoot and Schoettgen that there are more of these latent than Bretschneider admits ; at any rate that the writer exhibits many remarkable resemblances to the writers in the Talmud, although there might be in him a larger proportion of Hellenisms and Alexandrianisms. The similar passages in the Fathers do generally, considering the peculiar style of the fourth Gospel, and of the first Epistle of John, bear the appearance of quotations or recollections from these scriptures, and thus prove at least so much, that they were writings of authority from nearly the beginning of the second century. See especially Polycarp, iii. 1—3 ; Hermas, Simil. ix. v. 117 ; Comm. iii. 2 ; Ignatius to Magnes. iii. 2. The geographical and historical objections are difficult to dispose of, except by supposing that the Gospel, as we have it, was not written by the apostle himself, but is rather a collection of his discourses or writings made by some follower, disciple, or some member of his church, who in endeavouring to connect and embellish, has made mistakes.

But the many apparent realities, not borrowed from the other three, yet agreeing with the history preserved in them (which part of the subject is not considered by Bretschneider), form perhaps the most important reason for concluding that this Gospel originated in great part from, if not actually written by, the apostle.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ON THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

I. PETER and the other apostles were dismayed for a time by the death of Jesus; but having become persuaded that he was the Messiah, and having abandoned all for his cause, they comforted themselves with the belief that he was taken up into heaven like Moses and Elias, and would soon appear again to fulfil his promises and restore the throne of Israel. They determined then to maintain their society; and having assembled in an upper chamber those of the disciples who had not yet dispersed themselves, they agreed to preach that their Master was risen from the dead. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."—Acts i. 21, 22.

The resurrection of the dead was a stirring question at that time, and was part of the creeds of both the Pharisees and Essenes. The doctrine, therefore, that Jesus had risen from the dead, in a spiritual sense at least, would easily be admitted by the mass of the people, and, indeed, cannot be disputed by persons of any age believing in the immortality of the soul.

It seems probable that the original belief among the apostles was merely that Christ had been raised from the dead in an invisible or spiritual manner; for where we can arrive at Peter's own words, viz., in his Epistle, he speaks of Christ as being "put to death *in the flesh*, but made alive *in*

*the spirit.*" 1 Pet. iii. 18,\* *θανατωθεις μεν σαρκι, ζωοποιηθεις δε τω πνευματι.*† That the last phrase signifies a mode of operation invisible to human eyes appears from the following clause, which describes Jesus as preaching, also in the spirit, *εν ψ,* to the spirits in prison.

But some of the disciples soon added to this idea of an invisible or spiritual resurrection, that Jesus had appeared to many in a bodily form. In the book of Acts, the apostles are frequently made to profess themselves "witnesses, *μαρτυρες*, of the resurrection of Jesus." But as the word does not signify, of necessity, an eye-witness, but rather an asserter or testifier, this declaration of the apostles may mean only that they believed, and were ready to assert, that he was risen. That they had actually *seen him alive* since his supposed resurrection, is quite a distinct assertion, and not included in the former. And it is this latter point which it chiefly concerns us to examine. First, let us collect all the testimonies concerning the resurrection found in the book of Acts, which, it must be remembered, is not from the pen of an apostle, but of Luke, who does not tell us that he was present at the earlier transactions which he relates.

Acts i. 22, *Of these men must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

Acts ii. 24, *Whom God hath raised up.* 32, *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

\* The genuineness of the first Epistle of Peter seems to be very well established. (See Lardner, vol. vi. p. 254.) But, of the second, Eusebius said that it was not received in ancient times, but was read, because it appeared to many to be useful. And to the sceptical, ch. i. 14, affords suspicion of its spuriousness.

† The received translation is, "in the flesh—by the spirit;" but it does not appear why the preposition should be changed. 1 Pet. iv. 6, seems to be a parallel place, and shows that the insertion of the article does not give a different sense to *πνευματι*. "By the Spirit," (Matt. iv. 1,) is *υπο του πνευματος*.

Acts iii. 15, *And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised up, whereof we are witnesses.*

Acts iv. 1, 2, *The Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.*

10, *Whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead.*

20, *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*

33. *And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.*

Acts v. 17, *Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which was the sect of the Sadducees), and were filled with indignation.*

Acts v. 30, *The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.*

Acts x. 40, 41, *Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he was risen from the dead.—Peter's speech.*

Acts xiii. 30—37, *But God raised him from the dead. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people . . . . . For David was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.—Paul's speech at Antioch in Pisidia.*

Acts xvii. 18, *He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.*

Acts xvii. 31, *Whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Acts xxiii. 6, *I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead am I called in question.*

Acts xxiv. 21, *Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.*



Acts xxv. 19, *They had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.*

Acts xxvi. 8, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?* 22, 23, *I continue unto this day, witnessing—that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.*

In only one of these speeches is Peter made to say that the witnesses had seen Jesus. (x. 40, 41.) And here we have little reason to think that we have Peter's exact words. For, at the distance of about forty years at which Luke wrote, he could only have a general impression of the purport of the apostles' early discourses; and since by that time the stories of the re-appearance of Jesus had grown into general repute, and were believed by Luke himself, it was natural for him to mingle his own and the popular belief in his report. All that the apostles had said concerning the resurrection, although applicable at first only to an invisible and supposed resurrection, would, in consequence of the prevalence of the stories alluded to, come to be understood as attesting a bodily re-appearance. The distinction between the two kinds of assertion might easily be overlooked, and the one, when reported at second-hand and from hearsay, be changed into the other. It has been seen in the case of Gamaliel, that Luke allowed himself to fill up what he considered suitable speeches for his personages; we are therefore on surer ground when quoting the apostles' own writings.

In Peter's first Epistle, all the testimonies are these—

I. 3, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* 20, 21, *Who (Christ) was pre-ordained*

*before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.*

III. 18, *Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by (in ?) the spirit.*

This is the language of a man who sincerely believed that Christ had been raised from the dead. But the testimony to his having appeared again in a bodily form is wanting. Peter does not say or imply that he had seen Jesus alive again; and at verses 7 and 13, ch. i., he speaks of his *appearing* as an event still to come. "That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The Epistle of James does not mention the resurrection of Jesus.

Neither do the Epistles of John, nor that of Jude, allude to it.

The reasons for concluding that Matthew the apostle did not write the Gospel under his name have been stated.

John remains the only one of the twelve apostles who can be said to have asserted that he had seen Jesus alive after his death; and the reasons for supposing this apostle capable of fiction have been considered.

The argument, therefore, that a disbelief of the resurrection of Christ renders it necessary to attribute wilful falsehood to the twelve apostles rests on an over-statement. This charge need only apply to John. The extent of deception proveable upon Peter only amounts to this,—that he allowed stories which he knew to be false to become current, without *leaving on record* his contradiction of them. But it will be seen

shortly that there is reason to believe that Peter did not himself confirm these stories. With respect to the other apostles, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, the two Jameses, Matthew, Simon Zelotes, Jude, and Matthias, it is seen that we have little or no testimony from them upon the point in question. It seems probable that they, as well as Peter and John, at first treated the stories of the appearance of Jesus as idle tales, but in the end allowed them to pass current without protest. In the perplexity occasioned by the removal of the body of Jesus in a manner unknown to them, they might easily be led to believe some of these tales; and for such of them as they could not but know to be false, the honour of the church might be in later times a sufficient motive for silence at least.

In all parties, and particularly such as are hard pressed by opponents, men are unwilling to produce an appearance of disunion by contradicting their associates. They would rather let their party bear the burden of some extravagant but well-meant assertions, than cool the zeal of valuable adherents by an ill-timed rigour. The apostles having preached that Jesus was raised from the dead, their followers soon spread accounts of his having appeared to them in visions or otherwise. Perhaps some of the apostles believed that they had had such visions: at any rate, it was not to be expected that they should feel much offended at such rumours, or that they should take much pains to prove their falsehood. They were intent upon proving that their master was the Messiah, and had risen from the dead; and it might appear to them harsh and unnecessary to contradict stories which assisted the faith of the multitude.

It may be asked, If Jesus had not really appeared to them, what was their motive for preaching so earnestly the novel doctrine of his resurrection? Why should they make this the most prominent topic in almost every speech and writing?

The answer is, that, without this doctrine, their cause must be given up. A crucified malefactor was not the Messiah of the prophets; and if all they could say for Jesus ended in this, their claim for him would seem to bear absurdity on the face of it. But that he had risen, ascended into heaven, and was soon to come again, opened a very different view of the matter; he might then still be the Messiah, and his crucifixion, which for a moment had appeared even to themselves an end of their hopes, became a very trifling objection. The version of the Messiahship which allowed of the continuance of their warmly-cherished projects and attachments, would be eagerly welcomed. The difficulties in the eyes of more cool observers would only add to the ardour of earnest partizans, as affording scope for the exercise of faith. The unwillingness of the disciples to renounce a cause to which they were so strongly engaged might thus of itself have begun to suggest the idea of a resurrection; but if we add to this the disappearance of the body, of which they had ocular demonstration, followed by reports of his having appeared, which came to their ears, the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus might easily seem to men in their circumstances so strong as to lead them to class it amongst the things which they had seen and heard. Thus their master was proved to them to be the Messiah by the resurrection from the dead, and thus they must prove him so to others.

II. Paul did not join the church till some time after the death of Jesus, and could therefore only say what he had been told concerning his resurrection; but as he was the founder of Gentile Christianity, the nature of his testimony forms an important feature in the inquiry.

The grounds on which he embraced the cause of the church were, according to his own statement, the direction of the Holy Spirit, and his belief that the Messiahship of Jesus ful-



filled the prophets. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost*," 1 Cor. xii. 3.\* "Whereof (the church) I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, *to fulfil the word of God*; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory," Col. i. 25—27.†

But, besides the motives which men acknowledge to themselves, they are often unconsciously actuated by others arising from their position and character. And in the case of Paul, it is reasonable to conjecture that an active and enterprising spirit, which rendered the task of proselytism and the administration of church affairs in reality a pleasure rather than a burden; an enlarged understanding, which perceived and overleaped the narrow boundaries of the Mosaic or orthodox Judaism; a turn for ingenious disputation, which made the search for new meanings of the Scriptures a congenial employment; a vivid imagination, which was gratified by the romance of the Messiah's advent; and his Pharisaic belief of the resurrection of the dead; that all this unknown to himself, or unconsciously included by him in the operation of the Spirit,—assisted Paul's conversion to the rising branch the Essene sect.

He nowhere states, however, that his conversion was owing to the strong evidence which the followers of Jesus were able to bring of their Master's miracles and appearance since his

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\* See also Eph. i. 17; Gal. i. 16; ii. 2; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; 1 Cor. ii. 10—15.

† See also Rom. i. 2; xvi. 26.

death ; for he says, that Peter, James, and John, who were the very persons to give such information, *added nothing to him*. Gal. ii. 6, 9. There are no indications in his Epistles that he investigated the evidence of the alleged facts in a calm and judicial manner, and that he made this investigation the foundation of his new faith. In this case the company of the eye-witnesses would have been most interesting to him ; he would have diligently collected particulars from them, compared their different accounts, and eagerly sought any one who could bring to light additional circumstances. But he says, after speaking of his persecuting, “ But when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood : neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before me ; but I went unto Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came unto the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ : but they heard only that he, which persecuted us in times past, now preached the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me. Then, fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. *And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles . . . .* But of those who seemed to be somewhat, (from verse 9, evidently Peter, James, and John,) they added nothing to me.” Gal. i. ii.

Thus the convert of the greatest talents and learning in the apostolic times, who had all facilities of access to the apostles, not only did not attribute his conversion to their testimony,

but boasts that he hardly came into their company during the process. With what eagerness would a modern inquirer seek Peter, and James the Lord's brother! But Paul, three years after he had begun to entertain the subject, cared so little for the information which they were able to give, that he merely saw James, did not visit most of the apostles, and, as if to show that the fifteen days which he spent with Peter could not possibly have added much to him, he points out the differences which he had with that apostle, and frequently intimates that he himself ought not to be considered behind the chiefest of the apostles.

He is so anxious to make it appear that his own doctrine was mainly original, and independent of the assistance of those followers and relations of Christ—those to whom Christ himself had given instructions how and what to preach—that he says he communicated his Gospel to them.\* We may therefore conclude, that in addition to the slight information which he might have obtained of Christ's history, whilst persecuting the church, (and it cannot be supposed that he then took much trouble to inquire into the matter,) he owed his conversion to his own reflections, to visions, and to his interpretation of the Scriptures. These sources are enough to account for the doctrines which he preached; the ideas that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus, that he had been raised from the dead, and was soon to appear, having been rendered notorious by the preaching of the disciples, his own resources enabled Paul to complete the scheme on which he mainly insists in his writings, viz. that faith in this Messiah superseded the law of Moses, and permitted an union between Jews and Gentiles.

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\* See also Rom. ii. 16; xvi. 25; 2 Cor. iv. 3; Gal. i. 11, 12. But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. ii. 8.



However often, then, Paul may assert that Christ was raised from the dead, and although we suppose that in all cases he meant to include the idea that he had appeared to his followers, the value of his belief depends on our estimation of the sources from which it proceeded. Now, whatever they were, they produced another belief in which he was evidently mistaken, viz. that Christ was soon to appear from heaven;\* and the very consideration which would have placed his belief of the former doctrine in a different light, viz. that it depended on the evidence given to a past fact, he does not allow us to entertain.

It is remarkable that the Pharisees, although hostile to Jesus in his lifetime, as a reformer and claimant of the throne of David, yet became more than quiescent, even favourably disposed towards his followers after his death.† Whence could this arise, but from the new doctrine which the disciples then began to spread, of the Messiah's resurrection? This was such an interesting argument on the Pharisaic side of that great question of the day, the resurrection of the dead, that, in proportion as it provoked the

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\* This doctrine is urged by Paul with nearly as much force as that of the Messiah's resurrection, and often in conjunction with it:—

1 Cor. i. 7, So that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. iii. 20, For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ;—iv. 5, The Lord is at hand. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10, How ye turned to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead;—iii. 13, iv. 14—18, For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words;—v. 33; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8; 1 Tim. v. 14.

† Gamaliel the Pharisee was their advocate. Excepting the case of Paul at Stephen's trial, there is no instance of persecution from the Pharisees in the Acts. They befriended Paul against the Sadducees, chap. xxiii.



enmity of the Sadducees, it conciliated towards the disciples the good-will of their opponents. If it could be urged with any plausibility, that the Messiah, the representative of the nation, had been raised from the dead, this was a new and decisive manner of settling the question; which tendency of the doctrine was of itself an evidence on its behalf. And if a few passages from the Scriptures could be adapted to it, this would be, according to the method of reasoning then used by the Jewish sects, more pertinent evidence than the testimony of a crowd of eye-witnesses. All true sons of Israel were bound to consider the Scriptures as infallible, whether confirmed or not by the senses. If the disciples could but make it appear that they only said the things which Moses and the prophets wrote, their cause was gained, and further evidence rendered superfluous, in the eyes of many of the most devout Jews.

Paul's manner of arguing is exactly such as might be expected from a converted Pharisee under such circumstances. He speaks of the resurrection of the dead as a thing to be believed on its own grounds: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" He labours to prove that the Messiah's resurrection is the fulfilment of prophecy. "I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." And only twice we find him alluding to the accounts delivered by the disciples. Acts xiii. 30;\* 1 Cor. xv. 5—7.

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\* I do not add here Acts xxvi. 26, "For this thing was not done in a corner," because it seems that by "this thing" Paul means the whole transactions relating to Jesus as commonly known to the Jews, and these

When he had occasion to allude to the personal history of Jesus, he must of necessity repeat what was said by his followers. On joining the church, he received what was currently believed in it concerning Jesus, and this included some stories of his appearance after death. But, from his manner of introducing these stories, it appears that he received them rather because they agreed with the doctrines which he and the church preached, than as the basis on which these doctrines themselves rested.

1 Cor. xv. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the Scriptures*: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And, last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was

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ended in his crucifixion. "The king knoweth of these things." Paul could not intend to appeal to Agrippa's knowledge of the fact of Jesus's resurrection, when the whole church admitted that Jesus only appeared to his own disciples. To prove this point he has recourse to the prophets; which accounts for the observation of Festus, to whom such a mode of argument would very likely seem extravagant; but a Roman judge would hardly have called Paul mad for appealing to the evidence of credible witnesses.

not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

From this it appears, that one reason which induced Paul to believe the resurrection of Christ was his persuasion that it was according to the Scriptures. A second was the appearance of Christ to himself, which could only have been in a vision, when, as he says, it pleased God to reveal his Son to him. A third reason was his already-formed Pharisaic belief in the resurrection of the dead. Thus prepared, he could not hesitate to receive also the stories of the appearances of Jesus to the other apostles. But it does not appear, even in this place, that his belief was founded on the evidence afforded to him, that those appearances were real occurrences. His classing them with his own vision puts them even in a more doubtful light than that in which they appear elsewhere.

It is to be observed, also, that there are no intimations in the Old Testament that the Messiah was to rise the third day. Since Paul, therefore, could take up this notion so lightly, he might have also adopted the stories of the appearances to Cephas and the others on no better grounds.\*

From the little use which he makes of these appearances in what follows, it seems clear that his confidence in them was not that of a man who had fully investigated them, and become satisfied of their truth.

Ver. 12—20, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ? But if there be no resurrection

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\* It is generally allowed that Paul is a fervid and imaginative, rather than a matter-of-fact writer. Even in the favourite argument from prophecy, his inaccuracy in quotation and interpretation equals almost that of Matthew.

of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

This is the language of a man whose attachment to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead had contributed principally to his belief in that of Christ. Deny the former, and the latter falls. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen." Or, supposing that Paul merely intends to represent the absurd consequence of his opponents' assertion, that which he arrives at is only this,—deny the resurrection of the dead, and you are obliged to deny also Christ's resurrection; you are thus at variance with an established doctrine of the church of which you are members, a doctrine which I preached, and which ye believed; you make our preaching and your faith vain. That verse 20, "Now is Christ risen," only expresses a reference to the doctrine of the church, appears by comparing it with verse 12, "if Christ *be preached* that he rose from the dead."

Very different would be the language of a man who had acquired by investigation a conviction of the reality of the appearances of Jesus. Such an one would say, Though there be no resurrection of the dead in general, *yet Christ is risen*; for this is a notorious fact, resting on the indisputable testimony of Cephas, the apostles, and the five hundred, many of whom are ready now to attest it, and thus leave no shadow



of doubt concerning it. He would confine himself to proving that a general resurrection must be inferred from that of Christ, and not go on to contemplate the consequences of an impossible case, viz. that Christ was not risen. To plead in favour of Christ's resurrection from the injurious consequences of denying it, instead of appealing to it as an incontrovertible fact, is choosing the weaker line of argument; and as this is the only place in Paul's writings where he mentions the appearance of Jesus to the apostles, we are left to doubt whether he could have used the stronger.\*

Paul's mode of thinking seems to resemble exactly that of many Christians of later times. If the resurrection of the dead be denied, the first thought is, that this contradicts an essential doctrine of Christianity; "our faith then is vain; the apostles preached that Christ was raised, and so we have believed." They believe, no doubt sincerely, on this ground; but, like Paul, not having thought it necessary to examine closely the evidence of the fact, they turn instinctively to other arguments. So Paul falls into an argument of natural

\* It is true that the words, "But now is Christ risen," would meet this objection, if they could be understood in the sense of an appeal to a well-known fact. But their force depends entirely upon this; and the following reasons render it probable that they only appeal to a doctrine of the church; in which case their sense is, "But now, we have preached, and ye have believed, that Christ is risen, and therefore you cannot now dispute it."

Firstly. Verses 2, 11, 12, express this sense, and the phrase "but now" implies a return to the position with which the argument commenced.

Secondly. The words are the beginning of an elevated train of thought, which certainly does not appeal to facts, but either to the doctrines of the church, or to Paul's own revelations concerning the coming of the kingdom of God.

Thirdly. An instance of similar reasoning occurs at verse 29, where Paul argues that there must be a resurrection of the dead, because otherwise baptism for the dead, an established rite of the church, would be in vain. "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"

reason common to all ages, in support of a resurrection, viz. the sufferings of good men, which he urges in a forcible and affecting manner, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

As Paul himself did not believe the doctrine of Christ's resurrection from an investigation of the apostles' testimony, so neither did he require his hearers to believe it on this ground. They were to receive it as a matter of faith. As Abraham believed a thing improbable in itself, because it was necessary to fulfil the promises of God, so was the church required to believe the resurrection of Christ, because, in Paul's scheme, it fulfilled the prophets. And this faith was to proceed from hearing himself, to whom the doctrine had been revealed, and also from the operation of the Spirit upon themselves. See Rom. iv. 20—24; x. 8—17; 1 Cor. ii. 5, 10—15; 2 Cor. v. 5; Eph. ii. 8. The modern Christian, who has been accustomed to believe the resurrection of Christ on the supposed strength of its evidence, is astonished to find throughout Paul's writings no passage recommending this as a basis for faith: on the contrary, the repeated exhortations to avoid the words of fleshly wisdom, and to seek the influences of the Spirit, seem to discourage such a mode of conversion.

On the whole, Paul's testimony to the resurrection of Christ is of little weight, because he appears to have paid no attention to the question of the evidence, but to have believed on grounds which are not approved by the modern rational inquirer.

III. The undisputed apostolic writings affording thus very little evidence as to the point in question, we are left to depend for particulars concerning the appearances of Jesus on writings of a later date and less certain authenticity, viz. the four Gospels, and some fragments of writings of less repute.

Thus, if we except the Gospel of John, we have not, on this momentous point, the evidence of eye-witnesses, but merely second-hand and hearsay information. Let us collect together in one view all the accounts remaining of the resurrection of Jesus :—

Matt. xxviii. “ In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow : and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye : for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here ; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead : and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him ; lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy ; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid : go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught ; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him : but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Mark xvi. “ And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the



door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go your way; tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid."

Ver. 9. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;—they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;—they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

Luke xxiv. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things



unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."

Acts i. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from

you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

John xx. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni: which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when



Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through his name."

John xxi. "After these things, Jesus showed himself again unto the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together, Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the Sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked), and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved



because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth that disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written, every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

Paul. 1 Cor. xv. 3—8. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

Gospel according to the Hebrews, quoted by Jerome :—"Very soon after the Lord was risen he went to James, and showed himself to him; for James had solemnly sworn, that he would eat no bread from the time that he had drunk the cup of the Lord, till he should see him risen from among them that sleep." It is added a little after, "Bring, saith the Lord, a table and bread;" and lower, "He took bread and blessed, and brake it, and then gave it to James the Just, and said to him, My brother, eat thy bread. For the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep."

There are obviously many contradictions in these different accounts; but the principal ones agree very nearly in this—that Mary Magdalene and other women went early to the sepulchre, and found that the body was gone; upon which they returned to tell Peter and the other disciples; that Peter

and others went to the tomb and found that it was so ; after which there arose reports of Jesus having been seen in different places.

The non-appearance of the body after the Sabbath in the sepulchre where it had been deposited the night previous to that Sabbath, is one of those incidents which bears a very strong appearance of truth. For Jesus was certainly put to death ;—evidence direct and indirect concurs to prove that he was taken from the cross the same evening ; his body must have been deposited in some place, and the accounts before us, that this was in a tomb in a garden near at hand, are so far consistent and probable. That some of his followers, especially the women who had seen where he was laid, should seek the sepulchre after a short interval, is so probable, that the contrary would appear most apathetic negligence. Then—they must have found the body there, or not. Not the slightest hint has transpired, nor any circumstance indicating that the dead body of Jesus was found in the tomb : but all agree, and with narratives containing many natural circumstances, that it was not there.\*

Consequently,—the body was taken away by some one in the interval between the Friday night and the Sunday morning, (unless we admit that it was miraculously resuscitated, which will be considered soon). But by whom it was taken away is not so clear. The question seems to lie between those who put it there, and the disciples.

The report which we are told prevailed among the Jews forty years later, that the disciples had stolen away the body, agrees with the unanimous admission of the latter so far, that it was not found where it had been deposited. But we must

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\* Especially the account in John xx. 1—10. The story following, of what happened to Mary Magdalene when alone, is distinct, and evidently not so much within the writer's means of knowledge.

hesitate in admitting that Peter and the rest of the eleven were those disciples to whom the charge of the Jews should be attached.

The subsequent conduct of these more immediate and attached followers of Jesus, their boldness and apparent sincerity in asserting publicly the resurrection and speedy re-appearance of Jesus, the style of earnestness in their writings (of which the first epistle of Peter is a striking instance), the large admixture of lofty enthusiasm which must have been present with men capable of attempts to proselyte the world, render it difficult to believe that they were guilty of so gross a deception. They have rather the air of men self-deluded than of contriving impostors. To exaggerate and somewhat embellish facts in subsequent narrations has been done by men to a great extent well-meaning and honest : but to contrive the removal and secret disposal of the body, with a view to publishing its resurrection, betokens a greater degree of fraud, and of a lower kind, than appears to agree with the characters of the apostles. And short of this it is not easy to see what motive they could have for exerting themselves so promptly to remove the body ; for it was already entombed in a decent manner by friendly hands, and a hurried secret removal could not add to the honours of sepulture.

It would be too much, perhaps, to assert that it was impossible for the apostles to execute such a purpose, if they had been inclined ; for Matthew's unconfirmed story of the guard has every character of a subsequent legend, and neither was the garden entirely inaccessible, nor the stone immovable by human efforts. Still some degree of privacy would appear to have attached to a garden and a sepulchre, to whomsoever they belonged ;\* and the superintendence of the

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\* Matthew alone says that the tomb was the property of Joseph, and he alone also gives him the title of " a rich man." It would be unsafe to rely



burial by members of the council would give to the first deposition of the body a degree of sanction, which it would imply some audacity, or at least a cogent motive, on the part of the apostles, immediately to disturb. There are no indications of such an attempt on their part. They were taken by surprise by the apprehension of Jesus; they endeavoured on the first impulse to save themselves by flight, or by mingling unobserved in the crowds; the chief of them, Peter, had denied that he belonged to the company of Jesus; they did not even accompany the body to the tomb,\* fearing probably that this might point them out for capture. The interval of one day must have been very fully occupied in re-assembling, ascertaining what further danger there might be to themselves, listening to reports, and resuming courage to fix upon some plan.

On the other hand, Joseph of Arimathea, who was able to have the body placed in the tomb, was also very well able to have it removed. If the garden were his own, no one else indeed could do this with equal security. Any watch appointed by the Sanhedrim, (which part of Matthew's story however appears to be legendary,†) would probably have

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very confidently on the fact of Joseph's proprietorship, because Matthew may have inserted these two particulars in order to produce an apparent conformity with Isaiah liii. 9.

There were some common burial places, called the "graves of the sons of the people," Jer. xxvi. 23; but sepulchres in groves and gardens appear to have belonged to individuals. Jahn's Heb. Ant. §. 206.

\* The mention of the women as being those who saw where the body was laid is so distinct in all the four, that it seems to exclude the male disciples.

† Matthew's story of the guard bears these marks of fiction: Firstly, The Pharisees are made to say, "We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." From John xx. 9, it appears that Jesus had never said this, even to his own disciples. (See chap. xv.) Secondly, The anticipation of the Pharisees that the last error, i. e. the belief in the resurrection of Jesus, would be worse than the first, or the belief in his Messiahship, was too far-fetched for men in their



obeyed rather than have resisted him. He had the co-operation of another member of the council, Nicodemus. The complete silence of one who had more power than the disciples both to act and to speak,—the absence of his testimony when it might have been so useful one way or the other,—his retiring suddenly from a transaction in which he had begun to be conspicuous,—all this, in his case, is strongly significant.

History loses sight of Joseph and Nicodemus exactly at the time when they ceased to have any open intercourse with the disciples, viz., when they had embalmed the body of Jesus, and allowed the women to see where it was laid. Thus they were the parties whom we last saw in charge of the body, and it is for them to give an account of it. But as, from that moment, they have shrunk from public notice, conjecture alone is able to follow up their examination, and to gain an insight into their counsels and doings on the evening of the day of the crucifixion, and the Sabbath which followed it. On the close of that eventful day they could not have been undisturbed or inactive, for a more perilous situa-

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circumstances. They were more likely to rest contented with having got rid of a supposed mover of sedition, than to act further upon what must then have appeared a very doubtful conjecture. If the idea had occurred to any of them, that the disciples would endeavour to spread the belief of their master's resurrection, they could hardly be so acute as to foresee that this would in time grow into a doctrine more important than that of his Messiahship. Thirdly, The representation of the Pharisees being admitted to be fictitious, the obtaining of the guard, which is said to have arisen from it, must be considered fictitious also. Fourthly, The writer of this Gospel endeavours to enhance the interest of the crucifixion by inserting many marvels resting on his own authority alone, such as the dream of Pilate's wife, two earthquakes, the rising of the saints, &c. Fifthly, He had an additional motive for inventing this story, viz. to answer an objection of opponents in his own time. Sixthly, This story is not alluded to by the other three evangelists, nor any where else in the New Testament; although it would have formed a very important feature in all the accounts of the resurrection.

tion than theirs could hardly be conceived. They had been in secret communication with the Galilean who had just been executed for the treason of aiming at the throne of the Jews; and the examination of his followers, or even an indiscreet word from them, might proclaim to the governor, or some hostile member of the Sanhedrim, that they too were his disciples. That which constituted the merit of Joseph in the eyes of the disciples, his having "himself waited for the kingdom of God," would implicate him in the crime of Jesus; for the crucifixion of the King was equivalent to denouncing the guilt of all who participated in seeking the kingdom. The fishermen of Galilee might be allowed to escape unnoticed; but a counsellor and a ruler could not be neglected, if the charge of treason were once directed against them. One of those tumults to which the Jewish populace were so prone might be excited by the friends of Jesus: this would stimulate the governor to a more rigid investigation of the affair, and to more sweeping executions. Or, supposing even that no such attempt were made, the continual resort of the disciples to the tomb in his possession, or under his superintendence, must draw attention to Joseph, and strengthen suspicion against him. The disciples must be dismissed; but in what manner? To forbid them access to the garden, or to renounce them harshly, might provoke the disclosures which he was anxious to avoid.

The accounts before us supply the rest. The women came to the tomb early, and found that the body was gone. On a subsequent\* visit they found a young man there, who, if he were not an angel, must have been some one employed by Joseph; for who can suppose that he would have allowed an unauthorized person to be in this important charge at so

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\* Compare Mark xvi. 5 with John xx. 12.

critical a time? This person told the women that Jesus was not there, and added directions to his disciples to go into Galilee; of which message the version that has reached us is, that Jesus was risen and gone into Galilee, whither his disciples were to follow him.\*

Thus, if the accounts be disentangled from those contradictory miraculous additions which have every appearance of being the fictions of later times, the facts which remain, and a natural conjecture which links them together, offer an easy solution of the mystery.

The question concerning the disposal of the body of Jesus does not appear to have excited much attention at the time; for we nowhere learn that any search was instituted for it by the rest of the Jewish rulers; which certainly they would have done if they had thought it worth while; for it cannot be supposed that *they* believed that Jesus was actually risen on the mere report of some of the disciples. But there was, in fact, no reason for such a search; they were satisfied with having put Jesus out of their way, since he appeared to be a political as well as a religious innovator; and then they had more pressing matters to think of. The disciples did not appear to be men of dangerous characters; and being deprived of their chief, might very well be left to think and say what they pleased concerning his body. A belief in its resurrection might very well be allowed them, provided they abstained from efforts to avenge him. Whereas the exhibition of the dead body would have exasperated them, and, perhaps, the

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\* I have some hesitation in ascribing to Joseph the message in the terms in which we find it, both because it would imply more far-fetched artifice than the rest of the proceeding, and because these terms may merely reflect the subsequent belief of the church. But so far is agreed, that the body was gone; it is highly probable that Joseph directed some one in his garden to tell the visitants that it was not there; and not improbable that he endeavoured to induce the disciples to return at once into Galilee.



multitudes with whom Jesus had been popular. The best policy was to let the affair die away. The formation of a new religious society by the few followers of Jesus was not important enough to occupy much of their attention, particularly as, at first, they did not seem to differ much from the other Essenes; and when, after thirty years, they had become numerous enough to make it worth while to disprove their assertion of the resurrection, it was not easy for any one to find the body, unless he had the assistance of Joseph or Nicodemus, which they were not likely to afford. The opponents of the Christians were therefore obliged to say, that the disciples had stolen away the body; which indeed corresponds with the explanation given above as much as we could expect a popular report to do at the distance of forty years; for both Joseph and Nicodemus were his disciples secretly, and had some connexion with the rest.

But (to pursue this subject as far as we can with the help of mere conjecture, the only method of treating it now remaining,) there might have been another important reason for the silence and apparent apathy of the Jewish rulers, respecting the body of Jesus immediately after the crucifixion. It is that others of them besides Nicodemus, perhaps all who had undertaken the task of watching the Galileans since the council in the house of Caiaphas,—possibly the most influential part of the Sanhedrim,—suggested or connived at the proceedings of Joseph, as both expedient for themselves, and friendly towards their deluded countrymen. The priests, the Sanhedrim, and the Pharisees generally, were not malignantly hostile towards the followers of Jesus; they were anxious doubtless, as in other cases of incipient disturbances, to save their more ignorant countrymen from the consequences of their own rashness; for they well knew, although unable to make the populace fully comprehend, the strength



of the iron hand upon them. They were unwilling to invoke the cruel remedy which Pilate had shown himself too ready to adopt in the cases of the images and of the aqueduct, the calling out of a Roman legion upon their countrymen. The sentiments of Joseph, Nicodemus, and of those Pharisees who had at first wished to avert the fate even of Jesus himself, (Luke xiii. 31,) may be supposed to have called forth fully in this case the more humane promptings of the Sanhedrim. But not being able themselves to coerce, and doubtful of their ability to persuade the multitude, they were obliged to have recourse to manœuvring. As they had manœuvred to seize Jesus secretly in order to prevent tumult, so they were likely to adopt the same method in their proceedings after his apprehension. It is not likely that the vigilance so fully awakened fell asleep the instant Jesus expired. The people might not enter into their reasons for determining that Jesus must die for the sake of the nation, and it was desirable not to allow his body to continue to demand sympathy and revenge from the cross.\* Joseph consequently sought leave to remove it the moment life could be supposed to be extinct. In the garden it was liable to be sought after. During the respite afforded by the Sabbath, it was removed again to some more hidden depository, whither the Galileans could not follow it. If these could be pacified, and above all induced to return speedily into their own province, the disaffection would effectually be prevented from spreading.

The lenity shown towards the disciples when it was ascertained that they made no further political attempts,—the indifference, or very slight molestation, with which the Sanhedrim allowed them to preach the resurrection of Jesus for

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\* The motive given in John xix. 31, viz. the approach of the Sabbath, was certainly sufficient to urge, in this case, conformity to the Jewish law, Deut. xxi. 23, although it does not exclude others.

a considerable time, until it became associated with other unforeseen obnoxious doctrines,—the omission of any of the rulers, as far as we can learn, to demand the production of the body,—harmonize with these conjectures. But to whatever extent we incline to think that Joseph and Nicodemus had the co-operation of others of their brethren, the impenetrable obscurity in which the point must remain, evidently arises from this, that those who knew the most have said the least. If the Arimathean had been equally communicative with his namesake the son of Matthias, much bewilderment of the human intellect might have been spared, and the faith of the Christian church either suppressed at its birth, or invigorated by more heavy demands. But he and his companions were probably little aware of the importance which would one day attach to their testimony; or if they had been so, might have been equally disinclined to furnish it at the expense of personal ease and security.

This then seems to be the whole result we can arrive at. The Roman authorities had the power to remove the body secretly, but had no motive. For the disciples, the attempt must have been hazardous, although not clearly impracticable; but a motive for it is not obvious, and it does not agree with their conduct. Joseph, Nicodemus, and not improbably other members of the council, had the power; and motives in their case are obvious.

IV. Let us return to consider the disciples' own accounts, or rather those which have come to us as the disciples' accounts; from Paul, Mark, Luke, from a writer said by Papias to be Matthew, and from the Ephesian church professing to give the words of John. These state that the body of Jesus became alive again. At least, *one* well-substantiated account of its actual appearance is necessary to establish such an important point.

Mark, it is said, obtained information from Peter; and therefore it is in Mark chiefly that we should look to find the important testimony of the chief apostle. Now, it is plain that the last twelve verses of Mark have been added to what was written at first,\* either by a different hand, or by the same hand at a different time; and the original narrative, which has been replaced or continued by another at the ninth verse, *mentions no appearance of Jesus, nor any thing in itself miraculous*, after the burial of Jesus.

The first who is said to have seen Jesus is Mary Magdalene. But from the original part of Mark, and from Luke, it does not appear that she said so herself. Her first

\* Jerome said the latter part of Mark, from ver. 9—16, was generally wanting in the Greek copies, “omnibus Græciæ libris pene hoc capitulum in fine non habentibus.”—*Ad Hedib.* Qu. iii. t. iv.

Gregory Nyssen, A.D. 371, said that “in the most exact copies, St. Mark’s Gospel concluded with the words, chap. xvi. 8, For they were afraid.”—*In Chr. Res.* or ii. t. 3.

Irenæus, it is true, quotes ver. 19, “In fine autem evangelii ait Marcus: Et quidem Dominus, &c.,” but this is not equivalent to his deliberate opinion that it was genuine.

Eusebius not only says that the most accurate copies of Mark (afterwards he says nearly all) had *the end* written after the words “they were afraid;” but explains the manner in which probably the supplement came to be so generally inserted. (ad Marin. qu. i.)

In some copies there was this addition after the words “they were afraid:” “*And they told briefly all the things which they were commanded to Peter and those with him, and after that, Jesus himself sent forth through them, from the east to the west, the holy and incorruptible word of eternal salvation.*” But Rosenmüller says, “This addition appears to have been made for the sake of filling up the chasm which was now found in many copies. Since it is not at all probable that Mark ended his book with a fragment at the words ‘they were afraid,’ we must conjecture that the genuine ending of the Gospel was lost; and that it was completed at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century by some unknown person.”—*Scholia in Marc.* Credner calls this a second early attempt to complete Mark’s Gospel. Einl. § 49. The same writer says respecting the present conclusion of Mark, ver. 9—16, “In few cases does the result of criticism take such a sure and firm stand as here; the conclusion cannot be from the same author as the rest.”



report was only, according to John, that the body was taken away; according to Luke, that she had seen some persons at the tomb who told her he was risen. Matthew says for her, that Jesus met her and the other Mary on their first return from the tomb, and told them that he would meet the disciples in Galilee; the very message, which, according to Luke, she said had been given by the angel or angels at the tomb. This implies clearly an error in Matthew; for who can believe that she would have contented herself with delivering this message of the angel, if she had already, as Matthew says, seen Jesus himself? Moreover, Luke confirms his statement at ver. 23, that the women said only that they had seen a vision of angels, and not Jesus himself. This is enough to convict Matthew of incorrectness; and he, not Mary Magdalene, is responsible for this story of Jesus's first appearance.

John however says, that Mary came again to the sepulchre, saw the two angels there, and then turning round saw some one whom she believed at first to be the gardener, but afterwards Jesus himself. The particulars of this appearance differ much from that in Matthew; and there is again strong reason for doubting whether she gave the account herself: for the seeing of the two angels identifies this visit with the one related by Luke, according to whom, on returning from this visit, she *did not say* that she had seen Jesus. So that if we prefer the original part of Mark, and Luke, to Matthew, John, and the supplement to Mark, there is no evidence that Mary herself said that she had seen Jesus.

But supposing that Matthew and John have each only mistaken the occasion, and that, at one time or other, she did say this,—how far is she to be believed? The disciples considered her words idle tales, and believed them not. Luke xxiv. 11; Mark xvi. 11. We have thus their example for



considering her testimony alone as insufficient, and for seeking further evidence.

Luke says, that he appeared the same day to Cleopas and another disciple, whose eyes at first were holden that they did not know him. This is repeated in the supplement to Mark, which says that he appeared *in another form* to two of the disciples as they went into the country; but it is added, that the other disciples did not believe them. According to Luke, so far from objecting to the account as incredible, the other disciples gave a similar one themselves. The doctrine sought to be conveyed by the story appears to be, that Christ suffered in order to fulfil the prophecies; and as this doctrine became a favourite one in the church, Luke judged the story a proper one to be inserted in his collection. Although this view of Christ's death is frequently dwelt upon in the Acts and Epistles, the story of the two disciples is never alluded to. Yet if Christ had appeared to expound the prophecies concerning himself, one would not have expected to find his exposition quite forgotten in the church, but rather that it would have been preserved as a precious text-book. But it will be shown that there are no prophecies which can reasonably be interpreted concerning the sufferings of Jesus; and in this case the story becomes evidently fabulous.

The phrase in Mark, "he appeared in another form," shows that the idea prevailed that Jesus assumed different forms after his resurrection. Consequently any stranger whom the disciples remembered to have seen about that time might be supposed to be Jesus; and thus a foundation might be laid for many legends like those of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene.

Luke says, that the same day the eleven told Cleopas and his companion that "the Lord had appeared to Simon," which had been said before by Paul: "He was seen of

Cephas." The same story probably gave rise to both assertions; for both Luke and Paul could only state what they had heard from others. We have nowhere any particulars of this appearance to Simon Peter; nor can we discover that he himself ever said that he had seen Jesus. When he went to examine the tomb, after receiving the report of Mary Magdalene, he only found that the body was gone, and went away wondering. Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 6.

The same day, at evening, according to John and Luke, Jesus appeared to all the apostles at Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 33, John xx. 19, which does not disagree with the supplement to Mark, and Paul, but contradicts Matthew, who makes the eleven depart into Galilee to see him.

The story, in Luke, of Jesus's eating the fish, and showing his hands and feet, seems to have originated in a wish to controvert the early and original doctrine, that he was risen only in a spiritual or invisible manner. According to Jerome, there was a similar story in the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Whether the author of this Gospel copied from Luke, or Luke from him, is not clear; but a shade of probability in favour of the latter supposition arises from this, that Ignatius says, *Smyrn.* i. 9, "But I know that even after his resurrection he was in the flesh; and I believe that he is still so. And when he came to those who were with Peter, he said unto them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal dæmon. And straightway they felt him, and believed; being convinced both by his flesh and spirit. For this cause they despised death, and were found to be above it. But after his resurrection he did eat and drink with them, as he was flesh; although as to his spirit, he was united to the Father." Which story of Ignatius agrees very well with that in Luke; but Jerome says that Ignatius took it from the Gospel according to the Hebrews; which indi-

cates that in Jerome's time that Gospel was considered as its proper and original source.\*

John alone relates that, eight days afterwards, Jesus appeared again to the disciples at Jerusalem, and held the discourse with Thomas, who calls him, "My Lord and my God." This latter title betrays the fiction; since the term God was not applied to Jesus until the doctrine of the incarnation of the logos had been established, or near the end of the first century.†

\* Ignatius had been asserting with some vehemence that Jesus Christ suffered upon the cross really, or in the flesh, apparently in opposition to the Cerinthian heresy, that the divine soul or Christ left the body of Jesus to suffer in appearance only. To make his point still stronger, he says that he knows that even after his resurrection he was still in the flesh.

The distinction between what Jesus did or suffered in the flesh, i. e. by means of material organs like other men, and what he did or suffered in the spirit, i. e. by secret and invisible operation like that attributed to the Deity, was much debated towards the end of the first century. It is frequently asserted that he was born of the race of David according to the flesh, and crucified in the flesh. It was natural to ask, was he raised from the dead in the flesh also? The first Epistle of Peter, we have seen, appears to decide this in the negative, "he was crucified in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." But the writers of the third and fourth Gospels take the opposite view, and the minuteness and clearness with which they urge that he ate and drank and was handled, are probably to be regarded as their declarations of the extent to which they intended to carry the doctrine.

The Cerinthian heresy, that the Christ or divine soul of the Saviour had a separate existence from the human being Jesus, and left him at the crucifixion, would give peculiar interest to all legends asserting his corporeal nature after his resurrection, and might occasion some of them.

The manner in which Ignatius introduces his last point, "but I know that even after his resurrection he was in the flesh," implies that this was not universally known like the two former.

† The reader is referred to the works of the Unitarians for the arguments that the application of the term "God" to Christ, in the writings of Paul, is doubtful, or that the text has been corrupted. But the genuineness of the text in John has never been questioned; and the Fathers generally maintained that he taught the divinity of Christ. See *Priestley's Early Opin.*, ch. vii. Christ is called God frequently in the epistles of Ignatius, A.D. 107. *Smyrnæans* i. 2; iii. 11. *Romans* i. 1, 13; ii. 16. *Eph.* i. 1; ii. 7.

The words of Pliny about A.D. 102, "Christo quasi deo," show that the



Matthew alone relates that Jesus appeared to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee; but, that some doubted. If some of those who were actually at the mountain doubted whether they saw Jesus or not, we may reasonably doubt whether he was to be seen at all there; especially as the words attributed to him do not seem at all likely to have been said, from the disciples paying no attention to them. For, in the Acts and Epistles, they never baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. If Paul knew of this story, and believed it, he would hardly have spoken so slightly of baptism: "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." It seems not unlikely that some of the disciples returned to Galilee, expecting to see Jesus there; that subsequently some of them asserted that they had seen him there, which the others denied; that, consequently, the story was not generally credited, and that this phrase "some doubted," merely reflects the incredulity of some in the church respecting it. Mark, although he relates the command to go into Galilee, does not add any narrative of an appearance there: and was thus either ignorant of it, or neglected it; unless we suppose that the part replaced by another hand contained it.

John (or the person calling himself "we," who writes for him,) says that Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and gives an account of a miraculous draft of fishes much like that described by Luke at the first calling of Peter at the same sea; of Jesus eating broiled fish, which resembles Luke's account of the same thing at Jeru-

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Christians had then been for some time accustomed to address Christ in this manner. Jesus, in the legend, receives the title as a proper confession of faith. But its variance with the parent creed was still perceived, and consequently the Jews had been represented as remonstrating against Jesus as making himself equal with God.



salem; and of prophecies concerning the death of Peter and the long life of John, which are not alluded to in the Acts or any of the Epistles, except the second, or spurious, Epistle of Peter. If things so interesting to Peter had really taken place, it is singular not only that Mark, the follower of Peter, should omit them, but that the person completing his Gospel should give an account which does not admit of their being true; for he represents the ascension as happening immediately after Jesus had spoken to the disciples at Jerusalem. But the resemblances noticed authorize the conjecture that the whole chapter is grounded upon the above stories of Luke, with such embellishments as had grown up by the year 97.

Paul says, that after Jesus had been seen by Peter and the twelve, (query, eleven? for Matthias was not yet chosen,) he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; but he does not say clearly when: and it is impossible to discover when it could be; for John alone mentions a second appearance to the general body of the disciples, viz. when Thomas was with them. The meeting in a place with closed doors, and the promise of the power to remit sins, given to the same company, imply that the writer did not intend to speak of so numerous an assembly as five hundred. But twenty or thirty years afterwards some might be ready to say, that five hundred had seen him. The speeches in the Acts only assert that Jesus was shown to "chosen witnesses," (x. 41, xiii. 30,) which surely could not mean so many as five hundred. This story is important, because it assists us to estimate the weight due to Paul's testimony. Now, since it is impossible to believe that so important an appearance could have been omitted by all those who wrote professedly on the subject, if they believed it, it follows that Paul adopted a story which they disbelieved or neglected, and consequently that he was

far from rigid in investigating the historical basis to the accounts of the re-appearance of Jesus. This is confirmed by Paul's citing an appearance to James, which none of the Evangelists have noticed, but which is found in a fragment of the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

In his Gospel, Luke represents Jesus as ascending on the *same day* that he first appeared to the eleven; but in the Acts, written probably at some distance of time, he says that Jesus was seen by the disciples, and spoke to them during *forty days*;\* which agrees very ill with all the preceding accounts, in which Jesus is represented as appearing and vanishing suddenly, in different forms, different parts of the country, and only at intervals.

V. It was undoubtedly very easy to invent stories like these during the sixty years between the death of Jesus and the writing of the last Gospel; and there can be as little doubt that the disposition of the church in general was such as to encourage the invention.

Peter and the other apostles believed their master to be the Messiah, and that he would become miraculously king of Israel; they were disappointed and perplexed by his death; but, still believing in his divine mission, and finding his body gone, they received readily the idea that he was risen, and would soon re-appear to fulfil his promises. Traces appear in these very stories that the belief in the resurrection was not owing to an actual appearance.† Such a belief was not unnatural to men in their circumstances, whose religion contained histories of several persons taken from the earth

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\* The number of the days of his temptation, and of Moses' sojourn in the mount.

† John believed that he was risen instantly *on finding the tomb empty*. "Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed." John xx. 8. Peter was more slow. Luke xxiv. 12.

miraculously,\* and especially when they began to find or fancy a correspondence between their master's sufferings and the prophecies. Once thoroughly possessed with the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the king of Israel, they could find no solution of the mystery of his death but in the idea that he was soon to return to claim his kingdom: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Consequently, the reports which soon arose amongst the more ignorant and eager of their followers, that Jesus had been actually seen in different places, were not only a pleasing relief to their distress for his sudden loss, but agreed with the view which now seemed to disclose itself, of the divine plans concerning him. They might not unnaturally believe some of these stories to be true. Most men are not very rigid in their examination of a belief which agrees well with their interests and feelings: and men of more profound scientific knowledge than any Jews possessed at that time, have wavered on the subject of the re-appearance of the dead. The apostles did not at first believe them which said they had seen Jesus; but the influence of these tales, so pleasing to their own minds, and so powerful in promoting the faith of the church, afterwards led them, perhaps sincerely, to blame their own incredulity as hardness of heart.

Nevertheless it may be said, that the tales of the re-appearance of Jesus, if really false, could not have obtained a general reception without considerable opposition; and that traces of this opposition would be found. They are found in the tone adopted towards the unbelievers; for this shows that

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\* It may deserve attention as a conjecture, that the words, "For I am not yet ascended," John xx. 17, refer to an early impression of some of the disciples, that Jesus, on being raised, ascended immediately to heaven. As, however, the stories of Jesus' appearance on the earth multiplied, the ascension was postponed; and when Luke wrote the Acts, it was placed forty days after the resurrection.

the objections of such were neither unfrequent nor unimportant: "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." Mark xvi. 14. "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen me, and yet have believed." John xx. 29. "But some doubted." Matt. xxviii. 17. "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Mark xvi. 16. The ascription of such sayings as these to Jesus, shows that the difficulty of overcoming the disbelief of many in the church was by no means insignificant. Thus at the very time, the very hour when Jesus was said to have appeared again, scepticism seems to have been as prevalent as it is at the present day, and among the first disciples themselves. While the repeated recurrence to spiritual menace on this point by the writers of the early church, joined to the confused manner in which they give their own accounts of the resurrection, lead us to think that they found difficulty in overcoming the scepticism by an appeal to the testimony then existing.

VI. Upon the whole, the accounts of the appearances of Jesus after his death are incredible; because,

Firstly, Not one of them comes down to us attested in such a manner as would be commonly thought sufficient to establish a fact of importance. With the exception of John, (for a faithful report of whose testimony we depend on the integrity of the Ephesian church), not one of the supposed eye-witnesses gives direct evidence. Matthew says that Mary Magdalene saw Jesus; Paul says the same for Peter; Luke says that he appeared to Cleopas; the author of the Gospel according to the Hebrews speaks for James; and in each case the probability is that the account had passed through many intermediate narrators. The accounts individually are insufficient evidence; nor can they together make up a cumula-



tive proof, because they proceed from witnesses only nominally independent, but in reality influenced by the same views and feelings.

Secondly, These accounts present irreconcilable contradictions.

Thirdly, They resemble very much other tales of apparitions in the sudden coming and vanishing of Jesus.

Fourthly, It has been very common in the Jewish and Christian, as well as other churches, for those who wished to enforce a particular precept or doctrine to say that some eminent prophet, angel, or saint, had appeared to reveal it to them. Jesus appears to the two disciples, to tell them that he suffered in fulfilment of the prophecies ; to the eleven in Galilee, in order to give them the baptismal commission to all nations ; to the disciples at Jerusalem, to give them the power of remitting or retaining sins ; and to Thomas, to proclaim the necessity of believing in his resurrection without having seen him.

Fifthly, There were many who disbelieved these accounts in the earliest times.

Sixthly, Most of the attestations of the resurrection of Jesus in the apostolic writings do not of necessity apply to these accounts of his appearance, but to the general doctrine that he was risen, which might be in an invisible or spiritual manner. And those which bear a further sense seem to allude to stories of visions.

VII. The ascension of Jesus into heaven is related only by Luke, and by the author of the last twelve verses of Mark.\* It is alluded to John xx. 17, but no account is given of it. That in the appendix to Mark is given in a careless manner in one verse, and places the transaction immediately after the

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\* It is remarkable that, if these twelve verses be omitted, as we have seen was generally done in the early copies, *Mark, the follower of Peter, relates neither the miraculous birth, the resurrection, nor the ascension of Christ.*

first appearance to the eleven at Jerusalem. Luke in the Gospel seems to agree with this as to the time: but in the Acts, where he is more circumstantial, he says it took place forty days afterwards. A more striking event could hardly be imagined than the ascent of Jesus in the presence of his disciples; yet one of the Evangelists says not a word concerning it; another, supposed to have been one of the witnesses, stops short when he approaches it; and only those two of the four who are allowed not to have been eye-witnesses (and only one of these, if Mark did not write the last twelve verses) give any account of it. The belief that Jesus must have ascended into heaven like Enoch and Elijah was likely to give rise to some dramatic descriptions of the event, as of a real scene; and one highly-coloured representation has been preserved or drawn by Luke.

The ancient Jewish prophets, like many eastern writers, were accustomed to mix facts, visions, and allegories, in the same narrative, without marking clearly where one sort of writing ends and another begins;\* and this vivid manner of writing was imitated by their readers and admirers, the early Christians. Looking at the matter in this way, the stories of the temptation, the preaching to the spirits in prison, the appearances of Jesus after his death, and the ascension, are pleasing romances. But in considering them as matters of fact, we become as much embarrassed as if we were to endeavour to explain in the same way the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Revelations.

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The most beautiful fictions are those which bring to view the forms of departed friends; for in these the colours of the

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\* The passage of the Lord before Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6) is related as much in the style of facts as the rising up of Moses early in the morning, verse 4.

imagination are both deepened and softened by the more refined feelings, friendship, esteem, and sorrow. The sudden loss of such a leader as Jesus must have left a strong impression on any minds; much more on those of fishermen and peasants of an eastern country, who believed him to be the Messiah. The romantic hopes which he had excited, the sublime views to which he had raised their minds, and the feelings of veneration and attachment to himself which he had awakened, could not at once subside. All these powerful sources of action found a vent in the continuance of his plans, in the institution of memorials of him, in heightening and colouring to other hearers the incidents of his life, and in cultivating the delightful illusions of his resurrection, perpetual presence, and future re-appearance. Fictions proceeding from such feelings, and also connected, as they were in the case of the disciples, with the real interests of life, must be of a different character from those thrown out in the mere wantonness of imagination. Hence the appearance of simplicity, earnestness, and reality, which in the midst of palpable inconsistencies, pervade the evangelic histories, and render even their fictions unique. Hence also the reason of the superiority of the evangelic style to most of the similar fictions in the apocryphal books; for as these were written at later times, the immediate impressions produced by the advent of Jesus had become much weakened. In short, in the stories of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus we see traces of the sentiments awakened in some inhabitants of an eastern and imaginative clime, at an eventful period of their country's history, by the life, precepts, and sudden death, of one of the most extraordinary persons in history.

It is undoubtedly more gratifying to enter into the feelings of the disciples, and transporting ourselves in imagination to Jerusalem, Bethany, and the Mount of Olives, now become

desolate by the absence of their master, whose conversation and undertaking had formerly rendered every hill and village a place of interest—to listen with anxiety to the reports of those who say he is risen; to allow our wishes to overcome distrust; to imagine that the risen Messiah is still walking the earth, secure in his immortal state from further attempts of his enemies; to expect him at times to throw aside his invisible veil, and to look for him on the mountain, high road, and lake; to believe that his now divine nature enables him to assume different forms at pleasure, and to convert each dimly-seen or indistinctly-remembered shape into Jesus; and when he seems finally to have left the earth, to see him ascending to the right hand of God, there to wait the appointed time for revealing his kingdom. But imagination and feeling are unsafe guides in an inquiry into facts. The real occurrence is often found to bear no proportion in grandeur to the shape which it has assumed in contemplation. And in the circumstances attending the death of Jesus, we are forced to see a striking instance of the tendency of the mind to invest ordinary events with a higher beauty and interest than unimpassioned observation alone could discover, and to give to the common places of the world an impress of that higher life and perfection toward which it seems borne by its own nature. The disappearance of the body of the crucified Nazarene loses the mysterious grandeur which its connexion with themes most interesting to mankind had drawn around it, and shrinks into a comparatively poor and trifling incident when we approach for close inspection: but the sublime views which it was in part the occasion of bringing forth, and the moral revolution which it contributed to promote, are in themselves deeply-interesting facts, which have an important bearing on every inquiry concerning the ultimate destination of the human mind.



## CHAPTER VIII.

REMARKS ON THE OTHER MIRACLES IN THE FOUR  
GOSPELS.

IN common life marvellous tales are often met with, which, on taking the trouble to trace them back through various stages to their source, we find to have originated in something perfectly intelligible and natural. And when we have done this in some instances, we conclude that the same result would follow in the case of similar tales, coming to us through the same channels, although in this latter case we might not have the means of following up such a tedious investigation.

For instance,—Irenæus says, “ There were some who had heard Polycarp relate, how St. John, going one day to the bath in Ephesus, and finding the heretic Cerinthus in it, started back instantly without bathing, crying out, Let us run away, lest the bath should fall upon us, while Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is in it.”—Iren. l. iii. c. 3. Epiphanius tells the same story of Ebion, and adds, that “ St. John had never before made use of the public baths, till he was sent thither on this occasion by divine inspiration, to give this open testimony of his detestation of heresy.” Feuardentius, in his notes on this passage of Irenæus, says that Jerome, in his treatise against the Luciferians, affirms that “ immediately after the retreat of St. John, the bath actually fell down, and crushed Cerinthus to death.” An ordinary event is thus grown into a miracle of some magnitude.

There is no reason why we should not apply the same mode of investigation to the narratives of the writers in the century before Irenæus, viz. those of the New Testament.

**Draught of fishes.** In Matthew, ch. iv., and Mark i., there is an account of Jesus calling Peter to follow him, whilst he was fishing at the sea of Galilee. Luke relates the same occurrence, adding a miraculous draught of fishes, ch. v. John adds a miraculous fire of coals to broil the fish, and a prophecy of Peter's death; and makes the whole take place after the resurrection of Jesus. xxi.\*

Here, again, we see the very natural progress of a story during sixty-four years, from a simple occurrence into a cluster of miracles. And it gives us reason to think that other accounts of miracles would also be easily explicable if we had the means of stopping them at each stage.

**Descent of the spirit.** Matthew and Mark relate that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and that he saw the spirit descending upon himself like a dove. Luke says that the spirit did descend in a bodily shape, like a dove. John adds, that this descent of the spirit had been foretold to John the Baptist. By the time of Justin, there was also a fire kindled in the Jordan. Dial. with Trypho.

**Marriage feast at Cana.** John alone gives the story of the marriage feast, where the water was turned into wine. The internal evidence becomes therefore of the more importance.

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\* That all the accounts are based upon the same incident is inferred from the following resemblances:—

The scene was at the sea of Galilee or Tiberias	in all four.
Peter, James, and John, were amongst those present	id.
They were fishing	id.
Jesus gives the command to Peter, Follow me	Matt., Mark, and John.
Jesus promises Peter that he shall be a fisher of men	Matt., Mark, and Luke.
The fishermen forsake all and follow him	id.
When Jesus first met them they had caught nothing	Luke and John.
Jesus commands to cast the net	id.
A great multitude of fishes are taken	id.

“ When they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.” There is no reason why Jesus should be applied to for wine, which it was the duty of the host to furnish ; but however unnatural the application in reality, it was quite natural on the part of the writer, who has to prepare the way for the event. Jesus replies, “ Woman, what hast thou to do with me ? mine hour is not yet come :” a reply no less unnatural, and of which the only object could be to demonstrate the prophetic dignity of Jesus, by indicating that he regulated all his actions so as to fulfil exactly the divine decrees concerning him ; accordingly the phrase is a favourite one with this evangelist, John vii. 6 ; xiii. 1 ; xvi. 21. But as his compliance proves that the hour was about to come in a few seconds, such a declaration here would partake both of harshness and ostentation. “ His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” This implies that the mother of Jesus had the same foresight of what was to come that the writer had ; for how could she otherwise give such apposite introductory directions ?—Jesus having as yet exhibited no miraculous powers, nor having intimated that he was about to give any directions to the servants. The enormous quantity of wine produced,\* (about one hundred and thirty gallons,) and its goodness, which excites the wonder of the host, accord better with the aim of a narrator anxious to exhibit a great miracle, than with that of a reforming prophet. Whatever fact might have supplied a basis for the story, the greater part is evidently artificially contrived, to produce on the readers that effect

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\* Josephus, Ant. viii. 2, 9, makes a *bath* equal to 72 ξέσαι, an Attic measure holding a pint. The μετρητής or firkin, also an Attic measure, is commonly represented equal to 72 ξέσαι, or 9 English gallons. Jahn's Antiq. § 114. The bath is rendered in the Septuagint βαθ and μετρητής. Calmet. But Calmet says the bath contained  $7\frac{1}{2}$  gallons. Six water-pots of 2 or 3 *metretres* each (say 15) =  $112\frac{1}{2}$ , or 135 gallons.

which the supposed occurrence is said to have produced on the beholders; viz. "to manifest forth the glory of Jesus." But as far as relates to the beholders, the whole must have been a failure; for we learn elsewhere after all, that the kinsmen of Jesus who were there did not believe in him. John vii. 5; Mark iii. 21.

Now in this instance we have no means of detecting the progress of exaggeration or invention by comparing the story with another account; but, unless we had seen reason to confide implicitly in the writer's veracity, (which we have not, see chap. vi.) it would be more reasonable to suppose the simple fact to have been, that Jesus was once in his life present at a marriage-feast, and that some of his disciples in after-times endeavoured to honour him by attributing to him a miracle on the occasion, than to believe a story loaded with such improbabilities.

Peter's wife's mother. Matthew says, that Jesus touched the hand of

Peter's wife's mother, "And the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them." Mark, although apparently borrowing from him, or from the same source, makes the affair resemble a miracle more by saying "*immediately* the fever left her, and she ministered unto them;" and Luke completes it by saying, "it was a *great fever*," and "*immediately she arose* and ministered unto them." Now the variations, although perhaps made innocently, are important; for the reality of the miracle depends upon the greatness of the fever, and upon the patient's exhibiting immediately some visible sign of recovery, such as rising.

Casting out demons. A more striking instance of the same sort is the

following. Matthew says,

viii. 16, "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and cured all that were sick."

Mark i. 32, "And at even when the sun did set, they brought unto him



all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with demons. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases; and cast out many demons; *and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.*"

Luke iv. 40, "Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him; and he laid hands on every one of them, and healed them. *And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.*

It is obvious that the story has gained materially at each narration.

Matthew says, that Jesus said to a paralytic man      Cure of  
who believed in his power,      the palsy.

ix. 2—8, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house."

Mark ii. 12, "And *immediately* he arose, *took up the bed*, and went forth *before them all.*"

Luke v. 25, "And immediately he arose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, *glorifying God.*"

In such instances, the gradual enhancement is very different from wilful falsehood, since the additional particulars doubtless seemed to the writers no less probable in themselves than edifying to the church.

Matthew says,

The issue  
of blood.

ix. 20, "A woman who was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment I shall be *whole*. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee *whole*. *And the woman was made whole from that hour.*"

The narrative is simple and probable enough up to the last sentence, which might very naturally be supplied by Matthew, on supposition, as a proper conclusion, for he does not say how the fact was known. But let us turn to Mark's account.

Mark v. 25, "And a certain woman who had an issue of blood twelve years, *and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse*; when she

heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be well ; and straightway *the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague ;* and Jesus, immediately *knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him,* turned about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? *And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.* And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole : go in peace and be whole of thy plague."

Although Mark's additions have merely the appearance of amplifications upon Matthew, his account presents a much more decided miracle. And Luke has copied it in preference.

Feeding of  
the 5000.

The feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes is one of the best-attested of the miracles, because it is related by all the four evangelists, and without important contradictions, although Matthew and John, at least, appear not to have copied from each other ; also it is alluded to in two subsequent discourses. Yet, with all this, is it possible to say, that the evidence in support of this story is such as would entitle it to serious consideration if it were found in any other book? The earliest account, that of Matthew, is as follows :—

xiv. 15—22, " And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart ; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, and he blessed, brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled : and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away."

The only important additions in the other accounts are,

that Mark says, they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties; Luke, that they sat by fifties in a company; and John names Philip and Andrew as the disciples to whom Jesus addressed himself.

Now, in Matt. xv. and Mark viii. we find a similar story of the feeding of four thousand men with *seven* loaves and a few fishes, *seven* baskets being taken up of the fragments: which story seems to be only another version of the former, because, Firstly, They agree with each other in the order of the speeches and events, and almost in the words. Secondly, In the latter story the disciples appear not to have the slightest remembrance of the first miraculous feeding, but ask, "Whence should we have bread in the wilderness to satisfy so great a multitude?" and Jesus in his answer shows the same unconsciousness of any similar occurrence. Thirdly, The scene agrees in each story; in the former, Jesus had been in Galilee, and had come by ship into a desert place; in the latter, he is on a mountain near the sea of Galilee. Fourthly, After each miracle Jesus sends the multitude away, and passes over the sea. Fifthly, Luke and John relate only the feeding of five thousand.

Consequently, Matthew tells the same story twice, and contradicts himself notably in all his numbers. From xvi. 9, 10, it is plain that he considered that he had related two separate occurrences, which renders it probable that he merely gave both accounts as he found them; the different way of narrating the same story in the church having caused it to grow into two before he wrote. But in whatever way the doubling originated, it being admitted that both stories must refer to the same incident, this reflection arises,—since the two narratives differ from each other so much concerning the number of baskets-full taken up, and of the multitude filled, may not the real transaction differ from them both so far as that a

*less* number of baskets-full were taken up, and that a *less* number of persons than the whole multitude were fed?—on which two points the miracle depends.

Since Mark and Luke appear to have borrowed from Matthew, or from the same tradition, their testimony in this case is of little value. Every tradition concerning Christ was doubtless repeated by hundreds in the church; and, after forty years, an additional narrator added little or nothing to its credibility. Matthew and John alone have any title to be considered as independent witnesses; but they, too, may have depended upon the account of some one disciple, perhaps John himself; although even he does not state that he was an eye-witness. In fact, we have not an account from any one person on whom we can *depend* as having been present; we are obliged to rest this important point on an *inference*, viz., that John must have been amongst “the disciples.” \*

The discourses which allude to these miracles bear strong marks of fiction. In Matthew xvi. 6—12, the disciples, accustomed as they were to disputes on the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and immediately after a discussion with some of these two sects, cannot understand Jesus when he tells them to “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sad-

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\* It has been seen that our first Gospel is not probably the compilation of the apostle Matthew, and that it is uncertain how much it preserves of the record left by him. The doubt applies especially to the narrative parts, and must therefore exclude any reasoning which must depend on the supposition that Matthew the apostle was the real author. The reader will have perceived that, for the sake of brevity, the word “Matthew” is used frequently for “the writer of the Gospel of Matthew,” when the subject in hand is not affected by this ambiguity. Although we must regret the want of certainty on this point, it is not in reality of the first importance, since, owing to the little we know of Matthew the apostle, he and an unknown member of the Jewish church must stand nearly on a par with respect to credibility; i. e., for either of them it must be determined chiefly by internal evidence. We must even have depended, in most cases, on this, in order to be satisfied that the apostle was an eye-witness, since he is so seldom named in the Gospels.



ducees." And shortly after they are supposed to have witnessed the two miraculous supplies of loaves, they appear distressed at having forgotten to bring bread, and not one of them thinks of applying to Jesus. Could any set of men in such circumstances really be so dull as to need the reproof attributed to Jesus, "O ye of little faith . . . do ye not remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?" But such inconsistencies, although betraying the fiction to the reader, might be overlooked by an incautious writer, inclined to the marvellous, and giving himself little pains to preserve an historical coherence between his materials.\*

Again, in John vi. 26, Jesus is made to say, "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Yet immediately afterwards the people to whom he speaks thus, say, "What sign showest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat." The people thus appear to have forgotten the miraculous feeding as quickly and as completely as the disciples; and Jesus himself in his answer takes no further notice of it; for instead of appealing to it as a sign already given, he merely says, that he himself is the true bread from heaven. Can any one imagine, if the miraculous feeding had really taken place, that

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\* In bringing together truth and fiction in one narrative, some awkward joinings must be left, which it requires a violent hypothesis to complete. Of such a kind is the extreme dulness which it is often found necessary to attribute to the disciples. Their unconsciousness of the miraculous event was probably the truth; the miracle itself, and the discourse alluding to it, the fiction: the two are generally reconciled at the expense of the disciples' understanding. See more on this subject in the chapter on Christ's predictions of his death.

the people would have made such an absurd demand as to require for a sign, as the condition of their believing in Jesus, the very thing which they had just witnessed, viz., the giving them bread in the desert? The same explanation occurs here as in the instance above from Matthew—that there is probably a mixture of truth and fiction in the discourses as well as in the narrative. The demand for a sign was very likely to be really made, since Josephus says, that the leaders claiming divine inspiration generally pretended to give signs from heaven; and reasons have been suggested (chap. vi.) for believing that fictitious accounts of miracles were invented in later times to serve in the controversy with the opponents of the church.

In reality it was easier to ask for bread from heaven than to give it; but in narration both were equally easy. It is stated more than once that Jesus did not comply with the demands for a sign; but the promulgators of traditions after his death might think that a compliance with, rather than a refusal of, the demand, would have a better effect in promoting belief. Hence stories crept in of the actual giving of the bread from heaven, whilst traces both of incident and dialogue remain conformable to the probable original fact, viz., that it was asked for, but not given.

With the difficulties which are found to clog the narratives of Matthew and John, it seems to require a more established character for accuracy, impartiality, and freedom from the disposition to invent or exaggerate, than belongs to either of them, to compel our belief of such a story on the strength chiefly of their testimony; and the more so, when there are such obvious means of accounting for its existence. That some real incident served as a basis for it is very probable. With the exception of one verse, the 20th, Matthew's whole account is not unnatural. Jesus was one evening in the desert, and commanded his disciples to distribute what food

they had amongst the multitude. He gave thanks on breaking the bread, as was usual among the Essenes.\* In the darkness and confusion, (for, notwithstanding the command to sit down in companies,† those who are used to large assemblies will imagine that the voice of twelve disciples alone could not have enforced very strict order amongst five thousand hungry men, besides women and children,) it was impossible to know how many had eaten, and how far they felt satisfied. This situation of Jesus bore much resemblance to that of Moses, when he was called upon to feed the hungry Israelites; but so far, the performance fell very short of that of the Hebrew prophet. Consequently, one of the disciples, or some other narrator, could not resist the temptation to add that all the multitude were filled; and subsequently, in another narration, it was added, that twelve baskets-full were left. But here the fictitious parts disclose themselves by their want of coherence. The twelve baskets-full startle the reader, who involuntarily exclaims, "Where did they come from, and for what purpose?" since, up to the middle of verse 20, Matthew appears to mean that Jesus had divided only the five loaves and two fishes, and that the multitude were filled with what they had from these, giving no hint of a multiplication of the loaves, or of the appearance of fresh loaves, which one would think must have attracted the attention of the beholders, and formed one of the most striking parts of the incident. This clause concerning the quantity of the fragments seems evidently to have been added to the first story, that the people were all filled, by Matthew or

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\* "It is unlawful for any one to taste of the food before grace be said."  
—Jos. War, 2, viii. 5.

† This addition, however, by Mark, has very much the appearance of being one of his usual amplifications upon Matthew, arising from his propensity to enter into details.

some other incautious narrator, who, in his eagerness to magnify the miracle, did not stop to consider whether his improvement cohered with the rest.\*

The discourse in John vi. 32—58 leads us to conjecture that some figurative and poetical descriptions of Christ's doctrine, as the bread of heaven, which he distributed in the desert, being repeated, after a time, in the style of facts, contributed to the formation of the story as it now stands.

Blind man      Mark relates the cure of a blind man as fol-  
near  
Jericho.      lows:—

x. 46—52, "And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway-side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole [or hath saved thee, *σεσωκε σε*]. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."

The answer of Jesus is remarkable, for it does not pledge him to the instant recovery of the blind man's sight: it merely dismisses him with an undefined promise. It seems likely that the man did go away, was lost sight of in the

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\* It is curious to observe the manner in which the other three treat this difficulty. Mark appears to have thought upon it, for he states very clearly that it was the five loaves and two fishes which he divided "among them all;" but on coming to the fragments, he ceases to explain so exactly, and briefly copies Matthew. Luke preserves a more prudent indistinctness, and says, "he brake and gave," without repeating "them" or "the loaves." But John gives a bolder account, and says, they distributed to the multitude "as much as they would."



crowd, and that the relators of the story soon amplified it with the addition, "immediately he received his sight." But it might be asked, Did any body see him afterwards? had he his sight then, and how was it known that he had been blind? These questions were fully provided for in the edition of the story published about twenty-five or thirty years later, viz., in John, ch. ix. Here, although it is admitted that the man *did not immediately* receive his sight, (for we are told that the man only saw after he had been to the pool of Siloam,) the account is rendered, on the whole, more marvellous by a cross-examination of the man and his parents by the Pharisees. That John refers to the same transaction may be gathered from these parts: verse 1, "And as Jesus passed by" . . . ver. 7, the pool of Siloam implies that it was near Jerusalem . . . ver. 8, "The neighbours said, Is not this he that sat and begged?"—which all agrees with Mark. Ver. 6, "He anointed his eyes with clay," contradicts Mark, but it agrees with Matthew xx. 34, "He touched their eyes," plainly a parallel passage to that in Mark, although Matthew has made two blind men, for the speeches and circumstances coincide almost literally. Luke has inserted Mark's account with little variation, except that he makes the affair happen as Jesus went unto Jericho, instead of going from it; and he adds, that "all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

Now, the whole account in Mark has nothing miraculous, except the clause contradicted by John, that the man immediately received his sight. Admit John's account of the cross-examination by the Pharisees to be true, and the affair is difficult to explain, except by supposing a real miracle or a contrived imposture. But all the dialogue added by John is no more than what might occur to a man of moderate invention, zealous to answer objections, and, as he himself declares,

to make the church believe, xx. 31. And under this view all difficulty vanishes.

The two blind men. Matthew relates, ix. 27, another story of the cure

of two blind men, after that of Jairus's daughter.

Now, as Mark says nothing of these blind men after relating the same story of Jairus's daughter, and as parts of Matthew's two stories coincide with each other exactly, ("And as Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us;"—xx. 30, "And behold two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David;") it seems most likely that Matthew here also relates the same story two different ways. Thus, for one cure of one blind man in Mark, there are two cures of two blind men in Matthew.

Centurion's servant or child. Matthew relates the story of a centurion's servant or child, *παις*,\* viii. 5—13, which ends thus:

"And Jesus said, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour." Luke says, vii. 10, "And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well that had been sick." And John, in a story which has so many points of agreement with Matthew's that it seems to be founded on the same incident,† says, iv. 51—53, "And as he

\* From the ambiguity of this word, different versions of the story were likely to arise. Luke fixes the sense to "servant," by changing the word for *δουλος*. But John uses Matthew's word *παις*, ver. 51, and gives it the meaning "child" by substituting, at ver. 46, *υἱος*, son.

† John says that this was the second miracle done by Jesus when he was come out of Judea into Galilee; Matthew puts it near the beginning of Jesus's public progress. Both agree that the patient lay at Capernaum. Matthew says the applicant was a centurion, *ἐκατοντάρχος*; John, that he was a certain nobleman or ruler, *τις βασιλικός*. John says that the patient was the applicant's child, *παις*, or son; Matthew uses the same word, *παις*. Both agree that Jesus said, "Go thy way," and that the patient was healed

was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend: and they said unto him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house.”\*

Here the vague assertion in Matthew, which gives no particulars, and therefore might seem to be merely the narrator’s own inference from the words of Jesus, is very amply filled up in the later narratives. But had the authors of these acquired information of additional facts, or did they merely give an amplified edition of the first story? It is evident that the additions in Luke and John might easily be suggested by Matthew’s brief conclusion; but, on the other hand, it seems extraordinary that he, the earliest narrator of the three, should be ignorant of those important circumstances on

in the same hour; and both notice the applicant’s faith as remarkable. John, indeed, calls the sickness a fever, but such a variation might easily glide into the story in twenty-five years.

\* The following story is found in the Talmud, Berachoth, fol. 34, 2:—“When the son of R. Gamaliel was sick, he sent straightway two disciples to R. Chanina ben Dosa, that he should pray to God for him. When therefore he saw them, he went to the house-top, and prayed for him. But when he was come down, he saith to them, Go, for his fever hath departed. They answered, Art thou a prophet? He said, I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; yet when I am able to repeat my prayers with ready lips, I then know that I am heard; but if that happens not, I know that the thing is in vain. Then they wrote down, and noted the hour. And when they were come to R. Gamaliel, he saith to them, Ye have done nothing too much nor too little in your charge: for thus the thing hath happened with my son. At that hour the fever left him, and he asked for water to drink.” The date of the different parts of the Talmud cannot be exactly fixed, but there is a general improbability that the Rabbis of the first few centuries would have borrowed from the Nazarene writings. Schoettgen remarks, “An egg is not more like an egg than this story to the Gospel narrative. Interim tamen qui fictiones ingeniorum Judaicorum perspectas habet, is de veritate illarum statim judicium ferre poterit.”

which the evidence of the miracle rested; or, if knowing them, that he should pass them over in so slovenly a manner, whilst he gives the rest of the story very circumstantially.

Read John's account, and you find a decided and circumstantially related miracle; go back about twenty-five years to Luke, and the miraculous part is reduced to a brief sentence; approach still nearer to the source, and in Matthew the miracle has as much the appearance of being a matter of inference as of knowledge. How can we avoid suspecting that, if earlier testimony could be obtained, all that was known of the matter would be found to end at the words of Jesus, "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee?" From which it was *concluded* that the patient was healed.

II. Again, in common life, accounts are sometimes met with, the marvellous part of which is much reduced when we can obtain *additional independent testimony* concerning the original fact; and when this has been found to be the case in some instances, we look with distrust on other marvellous accounts coming from the same source.

So it is with Matthew. In some instances Mark serves as a check upon him; for, although Mark for the most part borrowed from Matthew, and in such places shows a manifest disposition to enhance the miraculous by many little exaggerations and improvements, yet, in a few places, he appears evidently, from the nature of the particulars added, to bring information gathered from other sources, possibly from Peter; and in several of these the miracle is rendered very doubtful.

Cure of the lunatic. Matthew says, in relating the cure of the lunatic, xvii. 18, "And Jesus rebuked the demon, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour." Any one would gather from this that an instantaneous cure was performed; but we want more precise



particulars of what was *seen* to take place; for the departure of the demon was an invisible operation. Mark's account is so different that he seems to have obtained some additional information as to this occurrence: he says,

ix. 25, "When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. *And the spirit cried, and rent him sore*, and came out of him; and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose."

All which throws the miracle into doubt; for the fits, which had lasted already some time, did not cease immediately at Jesus's command, but continued so violently, that the falling down might be the natural termination from exhaustion.

Now, since Matthew has related this as an indisputable miracle, he may not have had a better foundation for his other numerous miracles of casting out demons, iv. 24, viii. 16, although, for want of particulars, we cannot judge so well of these. Another passage in Mark, however, confirms the idea that many might be explained in the same way: i. 26, "And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. *And when the unclean spirit had torn him*, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him."

Matthew relates the withering of the barren fig-tree thus:—

Barren fig-tree.

xxi. 19, "And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently (*παραχρημα*, usually translated, instantly, or on the spot)\* the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon, *παραχρημα*, is the fig-tree withered away!"

Here the immediate withering forms a conspicuous part of the story; the force of the disciples' remark depends upon

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\* Schrevelius, Actutum, ex tempore, illico, in ipsa re.

it. But according to Mark, it was only found to be withered *the next day*.

xi. 13, "And seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. And they come to Jerusalem . . . . And when even was come he went out of the city. And in the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith."

The rejection of the miracle does not require us to suppose a contrivance on the part of Jesus to have the fig-tree withered. The character of Messiah, which he believed himself to possess, would not allow him to stoop to art of so low a kind; but it might allow of his relieving himself from the awkward appearance of disappointment on finding no fruit, and thereby maintaining his dignity in the eyes of his followers, by concluding the matter with a prophetic curse upon the tree. Yet he merely said that no man should hereafter eat fruit of it; which required no immediate change in the tree to save his credit, for no fruit could possibly be found on it before another season, when probably the affair would be forgotten. Nevertheless, the tree being in the highway, was either casually or intentionally injured by some of the crowd; and on a subsequent visit, any altered appearance would be enough to suggest a miraculous fulfilment of the curse. Since one principal feature of the miracle in Matthew, the instantaneousness of the withering, is destroyed by Mark, it is reasonable to conjecture that the proof of the miracle put forward by Mark himself, the drying up of the tree from the roots, within twenty-four hours, would,

in its turn, be much modified by some still more searching account.

It was the custom of Jesus to take occasion from commonplace incidents to utter predictions or other remarkable sayings. When events in any degree corresponded, the predictions were most likely to be preserved, as in the case of the fig-tree. Yet there is one prediction recorded without any corresponding event, viz. the promise of the tribute-money from the fish's mouth, Matt. xvii. 27. Matthew does not say that the fish was taken; and the others do not even allude to the conversation. If any thing of the kind had really been done by Peter, we should have expected some mention of it, at least from his follower Mark.

If any other editions of the story of the tribute-money had reached us, can we doubt that some of them would have borne the usual ending, "And it happened according to his word," or "as he had said, the fish was taken?" This story, arrested, as it were, in the process of formation, brings before us more distinctly the steps by which others reached their complete state. In many cases, it was probably difficult or impossible to ascertain whether the words of Jesus were really accomplished or not. But tradition would naturally tend to affix to all of them the easy and apparently desirable termination of an instantaneous accomplishment.

The two stories of the blind men in Matthew <sup>Blind man</sup> represent them as receiving their sight imme- <sup>at</sup> Bethsaida. diately when their eyes were touched. The story in Mark, of the blind man at Bethsaida, cannot be identified with either of the former, but it may be compared with them, in order to show the different aspect which a miracle of this kind may assume when related more circumstantially. For this is evidently a story which Mark had obtained from some other source than from Matthew; since, besides the remarkable

character of its particulars, it is introduced in a place where there is nothing corresponding to it in Matthew, although the parts both before and after it agree with the latter.

Mark viii. 22—27, “And he cometh to Bethsaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up and said, I see men as trees walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town. And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the town of Cæsarea Philippi.”

Here Jesus tries twice before he appears to succeed; which is totally inconsistent with the idea of divine power, but agrees very well with the supposition that the case was one of imperfect amaurosis, and that the walk from the town, the repeated application of the hands to the eyes, and the excitement of imagination produced by the expectation of miraculous aid, acted gradually as stimulants upon the torpid nerves, and permitted a temporary, or possibly a permanent, recovery of sight.\*

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\* Amaurosis, or gutta serena, is a kind of blindness in which the sensibility of the retina and optic nerve is either partly or wholly lost. It is sometimes an intermittent disorder, appearing and subsiding at intervals. When the eye remains at all conscious of light, or retains any power of seeing, it is called *imperfect amaurosis*. Sometimes during the progress of the disease the sight is cloudy, and the patient can see better in a light than a dark situation; sometimes he sees black specks, net-like appearances, streaks, and snake-like figures. He always sees plainer for a short time after the outward use of tonic remedies, such as hartshorn, cold water, &c. Richter relates a case of almost total blindness, in which the patient was able to see very well for an hour after drinking champagne. He also mentions a woman who had entirely lost her sight, but who was in the habit of acquiring it again for half an hour by walking briskly in her garden. Sometimes patients who are wholly blind have a small part of the retina still susceptible of the impression of light, usually situated toward one side of the eye. Richter mentions a man in whom this sensible part was situated obliquely over the nose, and so small that it was always a con-



In this case, Jesus sought privacy for performing the miracle, whilst in the cases of demons and other diseases he did not object to exert his supposed power in public. This seems to indicate that he was aware of greater difficulty in cases of blindness, and that he considered more solemn preparation, or more earnest faith, as essential to success.

Matthew, Mark, and John, relate that one of Malchus's the disciples cut off the high-priest's servant's ear, on the apprehension of Jesus. Luke alone adds, "And he touched his ear, and healed him," xxii. 51. The silence of those both before and after Luke concerning such an important particular, whilst relating the connected circumstances,—of John, supposed to be an eye-witness; and of Mark, who was acquainted with Peter, an eye-witness; and especially the omission of the story by John after it had been once promulgated;—all this is nearly equivalent to a denial of it.

Luke also relates, on his own authority alone, The angel that whilst Jesus was praying in the garden "there in the garden. appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him," xxii. 63. Matthew, Mark, and John, who must have had, at least, as good means as Luke of knowing this circumstance, relate the prayer without mentioning it. But it seems out of place to criticise as matter of fact what ap-

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siderable time before its situation could be discovered: he adds, it was also so sensible as not only to discern the light, but the spire of a distant steeple. The disease being generally occasioned by torpor or paralysis of the nerves, stimulants and tonics act as remedies by restoring the nervous activity. Electricity is sometimes used with effect. Amaurosis produced by wounds of the eyebrow has occasionally been cured by strong frictions upon the eyebrows, and by rubbing the same part for a considerable time with emollient oils and ointments. See *Hey, Medical Observ. and Inquiries; Scarpa on the Eyes; Richter's Principles of Surgery.*

pears so plainly to have been originally a beautiful poetical addition to the close of Jesus's career.\*

III. The foregoing instances show that the four Evangelists are not to be considered as writers who made it their study to adhere throughout to strict facts, but who allowed themselves occasionally to blend with these such fiction as appeared likely to increase the interest and efficacy of their

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\* It is curious to observe the close resemblance between two writers usually considered so dissimilar as Luke and Thomson. The Evangelist of Antioch says, "that Jesus retired to pray in the mount of Olives, and that there appeared an angel from Heaven strengthening him." The Scotch poet says,

"Still let me pierce into the midnight depth  
Of yonder grove, of wildest, largest growth,  
That, forming high in air a woodland quire,  
Nods o'er the mount beneath. At every step,  
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,  
And all is awful listening gloom around.

These are the haunts of meditation, these  
The scenes where ancient bards th' inspiring breath  
Ecstatic felt; *and from this world retired*  
*Conversed with angels, and immortal forms*  
*On gracious errands bent*; to save the fall  
Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice;  
In waking whispers and repeated dreams  
To hint pure thoughts, *and warn the favoured soul*  
*For further trials fated to prepare*;  
To prompt the poet, who devoted gives  
His muse to better themes; *to sooth the pangs*  
*Of dying worth*, and from the patriot's breast  
. . . . . to turn the death,  
And numberless such offices of love,  
Daily and nightly, zealous to perform."

It may somewhat diminish our regret at being compelled to part with such things as realities, to reflect that the mind which produces them is itself a reality. The loss of the beautiful evanescent shapes is partly compensated by the contemplation of that which can call them forth at will. We bid farewell the more readily to such visitants as the angel of Gethsemane, on reflecting that there have existed and do exist numberless minds which, by their power of forming conceptions of the sublime and beautiful, as well as by their disposition to perform themselves the gracious offices of the ministering spirits, stand before us, notwithstanding the imperfections of humanity, the real and accessible representatives of the angelic nature.

narratives. This ascertained character of the narrators must be taken into account in the examinations of other miracles which do not fall exactly under the foregoing heads.

Matthew has an account of the stilling of a Stilling the tempest. tempest by Jesus, viii. 23—27, which Mark and Luke appear to have borrowed with little variation. The miracle consists in the instantaneousness of the calm, which may be an exaggeration similar to that of the instantaneous withering of the fig-tree.\*

Matthew relates, that after the feeding of the Walking on the sea. five thousand, Jesus walked on the water, and that Peter quitted the ship, and walked on the water also. Mark relates the same thing, omitting Peter's part. John also omits Peter's walking on the water, but adds a new miracle, that the ship was immediately at the land whither it went. The fact might be, that Jesus rejoined them at a different part of the shore from that which they had left, and that walking near or in the shallow water, he appeared in the darkness to be walking on the water, which impression was afterwards worked out by John, or some other disciple, into the present story. Peter's beginning to sink might have been originally a description of his temporary apostacy, which Matthew put into the shape of fact; but Mark, who knew the apostle, was probably aware that this was a misinterpretation, and therefore omitted it. After the feeding of the four thousand, which, it has been seen, has every appearance

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\* Dr. E. D. Clarke, describing the sea of Tiberias, says, "the wind rendered the surface rough." And Buckingham, "Long-continued tempests from any one quarter are here unknown; but its local features render it occasionally subject to whirlwinds, squalls, and sudden gusts from the hollow of the mountains, which, as in any other similar basin, are of short duration, and the most furious gust is succeeded by a perfect calm."—*Calmet's Dictionary*. This peculiarity is not alluded to in the description by Josephus, War, iii. 10, 7. Nor by Lightfoot, Cent. Chorog., cap. 70.

of being founded on the same incident as that of the five thousand, nothing is said of walking on the water, but simply that Jesus "took ship and came into the coasts of Magdala."

Transfiguration.

The transfiguration is related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who were not present; but not by John, who was said to be one of those present. It is not alluded to in any other part of the New Testament, except in the second or spurious Epistle of Peter. It has the appearance of a poetical tale, composed after the death of Jesus, for the purpose of putting him on an equality with Moses and Elias; for the face of Moses shone when he came down from the mount; both he and Elias heard the divine voice speaking directly to them; and both were supposed by many of the Jews to have ascended into heaven. Possibly it originated in some dream of Peter, which, like the temptation, soon came to be related as matter of fact. But, whatever were its origin, there are these objections to its reality. Peter, on seeing the two men with Jesus, immediately knows them to be Moses and Elias, although he had never seen these two, and nobody had told him they were about to appear. Luke says, their discourse was concerning Jesus's decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, although Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep. The offer of Peter, to make three tabernacles, seems unnatural and ill-timed for the witness of a real fact of the nature described. Jesus charges the disciples, Matt. xvii. 9, to tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead; although, from John xx. 9, it would seem he had never given them notice of such an event. Moreover, the whole story was only published a considerable time afterwards; for Luke says, ix. 36, "they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."



John relates that Jesus uttered in public a prayer ending with these words :—

The voice  
from hea-  
ven.

“ Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by said that it thundered : others said, an angel spake to him. xii. 28, 29.”

I transcribe here Middleton's remarks\* on the Bath Kol:—“ The spirit of prophecy which continued in the Jewish church till after its restoration from the Babylonish captivity, had entirely ceased under the second temple, for three centuries at least before Christ. But there succeeded to it, as all the Jewish writers unanimously testify, an *oracular voice from heaven*, which was given occasionally to the leading rabbis or teachers of the law, to direct them how to act and speak on particular emergencies. It is said to have been accompanied generally with a kind of thunder, out of which it issued in a clear and articulate manner, and thence derived its name of Bath Kol, the daughter-voice, or daughter of a voice. The Bath Kol, says Lightfoot, was this : ‘ When a voice or thunder came out of Heaven, another voice came out of it.’ (Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 128; in Matt. iii. 17.) This way of divine instruction is affirmed to have been subsisting during the time of our Saviour, and to the final dissolution of the Jewish state; and is considered by all their doctors as an inferior kind of prophecy, or a sort of twilight indulged to them after the sun of prophecy was set; (Spencer on the Vulgar Prophecies, ch. vii. p. 126;) and from this pretended source they derived the greater part of those traditions with which they corrupted the law of Moses.” However, Dr. Spencer said, “ the Bath Kol was a Jewish fable;” and Prideaux, that “ the Bath Kol was no such

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\* Middleton's Examination of the Bishop of London's Discourse on Prophecy.

voice from heaven as they pretended, but a fantastical way of divination of their own invention.”—Connect., vol. ii. p. 256, edit. fol.

Now, supposing that there was so much of real incident as the clap of thunder, which, according to the narrative itself, was, in the opinion of many present, all that happened, how natural it was for John or other disciples to suppose it to be the Bath Kol, and first to imagine, and then to relate, the words of the divine voice !

Yet, taking into consideration the ascertained characteristics of the fourth Gospel, it is perhaps more reasonable to conjecture that the whole is merely an embellishment intended to glorify Jesus. His ministry had been ushered in by a voice from heaven in all the narratives ; in this, its termination is also signalized by the celestial sign.

Jairus's  
daughter.

The raising of Jairus's daughter, Matt. ix. 18, Mark v. 22 ; Luke viii. 41, is comparatively well attested ; for Mark, who here plainly brings additional information, agrees in the chief points with Matthew. It cannot be supposed to have been a concerted contrivance between Jairus and Jesus ; for such a contrivance could only have had for its object to convince the multitude of the miraculous character of Jesus, and the scene would have been acted in public : whereas the multitude were excluded, and Jesus admitted only the father, the mother, and three of his own disciples—Peter, James, and John. Since Jairus applied to him in public, and professed his belief, he could not refuse to exert his supposed miraculous power, which, for ought he knew, might be sufficient even to raise the dead, since it had been found competent to cast out demons. Yet the privacy which he sought for the actual performance of the miracle, when his previous announcement to the multitude would seem to entitle them also to the means of conviction, at least

by an immediate report from those present, indicates some latent distrust. The disciples, according to Mark and Luke, were even forbidden to tell any one what had taken place in the house, which secrecy is inexplicable, on the supposition of the miracle having been really performed; for as yet there was no disposition to make him a king, and he had not been disinclined to perform publicly numerous other miracles, of a more dubious sort to modern inquirers, but indubitable in the eyes of the Jewish multitude, viz., casting out demons, and healing the sick. If the object of the miracle were to prove his divine authority, why should such a decided miracle as raising a dead person be kept secret?

The point, however, on which the miracle depends is, that the child was really dead. Now, the three accounts before us state that Jesus said, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." So that if we believe Jesus himself literally,\* the matter is explained at once; and the existence of the story as it now stands is accounted for thus: Matthew, or his informant, desirous to exhibit the affair as a miracle, by a slight variation converted the first message, that the child was dying, into an assertion that she was dead, *ετελευτησεν*. Mark, from his additional means of information, gave the first original message correctly; but having also Matthew before him, and being himself well disposed to represent the event as miraculous, he inserted a second message, coming

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\* The speech attributed to Jesus by Mark, "Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," is inconsistent with a belief on his part that she was really dead; for, in this case, why should he choose to say, in so pointed a manner, what was not only incorrect, but must throw so much doubt upon the miracle? The quiet consciousness that the words will be understood finally in a figurative sense, seems to belong rather to the narrator, who has his readers in view, than to Jesus, who would probably have regard to the impression produced upon his hearers. But the objection does not apply, if he be supposed to mean what he said literally.

up fully to Matthew's statement, that the maid was dead. This point being established at the outset of the story, the rest was accommodated to a figurative interpretation of the words of Jesus, and with this view probably the addition, "they laughed him to scorn," was made. For the reality of this is inconsistent with the opinion which the people of Galilee had of Jesus as a prophet, and which was shared by Jairus and his household, as is seen by their sending for him. With respect to the recovery of the maiden, Matthew merely says, "he took her by the hand, and the maid arose." Mark says, "straightway she arose, and walked," which might be one of his frequent exaggerations.

Leaving aside the question of the Evangelist's accuracy, the story, to have any pretension to truth, must have come from one of these six—Peter, James, John, Jairus, his wife, or his daughter; and how can it be shown that each of these was incapable of adding such variations as were required to make the story miraculous? And it cannot be doubted that, if any one of these had issued it, the story would have appeared sufficiently authentic to the majority of the church.

But, after all, the most simple conclusion may be this: Jesus commanded secrecy to those who were with him in the chamber; he was obeyed, and consequently no one else knew exactly what took place there; but, as Matthew says, "a report went abroad into all that land," and that report is the story which we now have.

Raising the dead at Nain. Another account of raising a dead person, viz., the widow's son at Nain, is related by Luke only, vii. 11—15. He places it the day after the cure of the centurion's servant (or son) at Capernaum. Now, Matthew and John, who have related this cure, say nothing concerning the widow's son. Luke's motive for inserting the story seems to be the same as for inserting verse 21, viz., to make it appear



that John's disciples had ocular demonstration of the truth of the message they were to carry to him. In Matthew's account the mode of expression might be taken to imply this, for he makes Jesus say, in answer to the question of John's disciples, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"—"Go and shew John again, *απαγγειλατε Ιωαννη*, the things which ye do hear and see: (the present tense, *ἀ ακουετε και βλεπετε*;) the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Luke copies nearly all Matthew's account of this discourse concerning John, and adds, ver. 21, "*And in that same hour* he cured many of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight." All this mass of miracles, not noticed elsewhere, was plainly done, or said by Luke to be done, in order to make the words in Matthew, "which ye hear and see," literally true. Now, the raising of the dead at Nain, which Luke makes also to be done within the knowledge of John's disciples, completes the list of miracles mentioned in the message, and has therefore the appearance of being inserted for that purpose. It seemed the more necessary, because Matthew had not given any account of raising the dead which could warrant such a message; for although he, perhaps, had in his mind his own story of Jairus's daughter, yet Mark had prevented subsequent writers from citing this for the purpose, by saying that the disciples were commanded to tell no man of it. And it has been shown to be highly probable that Luke had both Matthew's and Mark's Gospels before him.

The obvious objection to the reality of this miracle is the little notice taken of it. There are only three stories of raising the dead by Jesus, and this resurrection at Nain was better worth publishing than that of Jairus's daughter, since

it occurred in the open street, and the death was less doubtful. Matthew and Mark could not have forgotten or wilfully suppressed it, and consequently did not know of it.

Raising of  
Lazarus.

John alone relates the raising of Lazarus, which, if his account were true, was the most splendid and public of all the miracles. For, according to him, it was done before friends and enemies, without any of the usual prohibitions to tell of it: many came to see Lazarus at the supper at Bethany, and the people bare record of it when Jesus entered publicly into Jerusalem.

But, notwithstanding all this, neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke, appear to have had any knowledge of the affair; for not only are they silent concerning it, but their accounts do not easily admit of its introduction. John puts the supper, at which Lazarus sat after his resurrection, *one day before* the public entry into Jerusalem. But Matthew, as well as Mark and Luke, makes it appear that Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem on coming direct from Jericho, a distance of about twenty miles; and that *after this* he took up his abode at Bethany. John's story of Lazarus requires, therefore, another previous abode at Bethany, which breaks in violently upon the order of events in Matthew, whose narrative seems to exclude the possibility of Jesus having already resided for some time so near to Jerusalem as fifteen furlongs. See Matt. xix. 1; xx. 18, 29; xxi. 1.

The supper at Bethany, also, is related by Matthew long after the entrance, although he is not precise as to the date. xxvi. 6.

This supper is proved to be the same as the one at which John says Lazarus was present, by the alabaster box of ointment, and the speech of Judas for the poor. Yet Matthew and Mark seem quite ignorant of that which John says attracted the Jews, the presence of the revived Lazarus.

The story of Lazarus seems again to be forced upon the attention of the first three Evangelists, when they relate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the conduct of the multitude; for John says, that the people then bare record of his having raised Lazarus. But here also they make not the slightest allusion to it.

It is impossible to conceive any plausible reason for this concealment,\* when the same three Evangelists appear so willing to relate all the miracles they were acquainted with, and actually relate some which were said to be done in secret. That they had all forgotten this miracle so completely that it did not once occur to them whilst relating the connected cir-

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\* The chief reasons which I have been able to find are, that the first three Evangelists studied brevity, and that they were afraid of exposing the family at Bethany to the persecution of the Jews. Schleiermacher says, "Only under one view does the omission of the raising of Lazarus and of the young man at Nain excite no surprise, but seem natural, that is, if we suppose that the first written accounts originated in the efforts and at the instance of persons who, not personally acquainted with Christ, and therefore not in the same sense his contemporaries (as the twelve) sought for circumstantial accounts, and aimed at perpetuating by writing the voice of oral tradition before it died away. For, on the one hand, these persons had less courage to apply to the apostles, who were busily engaged in the greater work of preaching and propagating Christianity, except in particular cases on an extraordinary inducement, and rather sought out friends and hearers of the second class: on the other hand, they of course directed their researches principally to places from which they might hope for the most abundant harvest, that is, to Capernaum and Jerusalem. At the latter place, now, the most recent occurrences naturally left the deepest impression on the memory of men; and hence the portions of the three Gospels, which are common to them, consist chiefly of incidents from the different periods of Christ's stay at Capernaum, and his last stay at Jerusalem. What occurred at other places could not so easily form a part of their common stock."—Crit. Essay on Luke, vii. 11—50. A very laboured excuse; for the raising of Lazarus was said to have occurred within half an hour's walk of Jerusalem, and shortly before the death of Jesus; and however modest or inattentive the writers might have been in their search for materials, it is hard to imagine how they could have avoided encountering what must have been talked of by so many, if it had really happened.

cumstances, cannot be imagined; and if any miracle deserved a preference in the eyes of narrators disposed to do honour to Christ, or even to give a faithful account of him, it was this.

The Acts and Epistles nowhere allude to this story, although it would have afforded Paul a very good instance of the resurrection of the body. 1 Cor. xv. 35.

The first mention, therefore, of the most public and decisive of the miracles, appears in a writing published at Ephesus sixty years afterwards;—a distance both of time and place which rendered it easy to publish fictitious statements without fear of contradiction. Supposing that Jesus had really visited the tomb of Lazarus, and told his sisters that he would rise again; supposing, also, that the question had been raised, “Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have prevented Lazarus from dying?” we may imagine how great was the temptation, to a writer intent upon making his readers believe, to enlarge the incident, by a few additional sentences, into a convincing miracle. That the story was written with such a view appears throughout. xi. 15, “I am glad I was not there, to the intent ye may believe;”—27, “I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God;”—42, “I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.” And although much of the story appears very natural, some parts indicate an intermixture of fiction. The misapprehension of the disciples concerning the word “sleep,” ver. 12, is, in the usual style of John, to enhance the effect of the subsequent answer or performance of Jesus. Mary’s speech, ver. 32, on seeing Jesus, is in the same words as Martha’s, ver. 21. Martha’s first speech implies an expectation that Jesus will raise Lazarus,—“I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee;” but, on coming to the grave, she makes an objection to obeying the order of Jesus,



quite inconsistent with her previous expectation, but which renders the coming event more striking to the reader. The same applies to the weeping of Jesus; it is the novelist's prelude to a bright denouement; but in reality Jesus could not have felt so deeply distressed, when conscious of the joyful miracle which he was about to operate; nor can we allow that it was the effect of strong emotion combined with uncertainty, because the writer had intimated at the very outset that Jesus knew assuredly what he was going to perform. Ver. 4 and 11, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God,"—"I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Martha's confession of faith, ver. 27, is precisely the formula in which the author avows the object of his book at the end, viz. "believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." "Which should come into the world" bears strongly the impress of the writer's own peculiar style. The narration of what Martha said to Mary secretly, and of what took place in the house, in the same tone as the account of what was done where Jesus was, betrays the inventor rather than the eye-witness; for it can hardly be supposed that John went backward and forward to draw up a report of what happened at both places. The witness of a real event of such a kind could scarcely have refrained from entering into further particulars concerning the looks and words of Lazarus on receiving life again; but here the story stops short, as if the writer's purpose were accomplished in having related a miracle.

It is remarkable that the raising of Jairus's daughter, which was said to be performed in secret, is related by three Evangelists; whilst the other two resurrections, which were said to be public, rest each on the testimony of one. The omission of an incident by one writer does not always invalidate the narration of it by another; but, considering

the extreme importance of the last two miracles to the Christian cause, as well as their impressive nature, it does seem an insuperable objection that three out of the four Evangelists should have neglected or forgotten them.

## CHAPTER IX.

## GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO THE MIRACLES OF JESUS.

I. HE himself put his miracles of healing upon a level with the performances of the Jewish exorcists. Matt. xii. 27, "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children \* cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges." If his cures could not more fairly be attributed to Beelzebub than those of the Jews to whom he alludes, neither could they more properly be considered miracles. But it is only in the present age that such an inference excludes the miracle, because in Christ's own time the arts of healing and magic were supposed to be closely related, and Josephus speaks several times of the casting out of demons as performed by miraculous means.†

II. He recognized the attempts of others as real miracles, making no distinction between them and his own. Mark ix. 38, 39, "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw

\* Apparently a class countenanced by the Pharisees, but their exact description seems uncertain. "Per filios vestros videtur Christus intelligere Discipulos aliquos Phariseorum, hoc est, nonnullos e Judæis, qui exorcismis uti videbantur Dæmonia ejicere . . ."—Lightfoot. Medicine among the Jews was the province of the priests; but from Josephus it appears that others assumed not unfrequently the office of exorcising.

† It might be answered that Jesus here only uses an *argumentum ad hominem* equivalent to this, "You Pharisees believe that your sons cast out demons by the Spirit of God, and ought not therefore to attribute my apparently similar cures to another agency. I know however that mine alone do really proceed from the Spirit of God." But to attribute this meaning, even in thought, to Jesus, is perfectly gratuitous; the obvious sense is, that Jesus intends sincerely to strengthen his case by the examples in question; and this is supported by the next objection.

one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me." There have been many instances, in all ages of the church, of persons pretending to exorcise by merely using the name of some eminent saint or prophet; but no satisfactory proof of any thing miraculous is to be found in such stories, and in general they are considered undeserving of serious attention. Yet the performances of the pretender mentioned by Mark are no more questioned on the score of genuineness than those of Christ himself.\*

III. He admits that there was more difficulty in performing some miracles than others. Matt. xvii. 21, "Howbeit this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting."

IV. He generally required to see that the applicants fully believed in his miraculous power before he attempted the cure. Matt. ix. 27, "*Believe ye* that I am able to do this?" ix. 2, "Jesus *seeing their faith*, said unto the sick of the palsy," &c. Mark vi. 5, "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid hands upon a few sick folk, and healed

\* Middleton says, (in the *Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers of the Early Church*,) the Fathers allowed the power of casting out devils to both Jews and Gentiles, as well before as after our Saviour's coming. Justin Martyr says, "All devils yield and submit to the name of Jesus, when they would not to any other name of their kings, prophets, or patriarchs; yet if any should exorcise them in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they would in like manner submit. For your exorcists, as well as the Gentiles, use this art in exorcising, together with certain fumes and ligatures."—Dial. with Trypho, part 2.

"The Jews even now by this same invocation of the name of God drive away devils."—Irenæus, l. 2, c. 5.

"If a man invoke by the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the devils will obey, and do what they are commanded; but if he translate those names, according to their meaning, into any other language, they will have no force at all."—Origen con. Celsum, l. 5.



them. And he marvelled *because of their unbelief*." This throws much doubt upon the miracle ; for besides the physical influence which the belief itself might have, the applicant's own credit became in some degree pledged to vouch for its performance. When a man has solemnly protested that he believes a thing will happen, he is no longer a dispassionate observer, but he is ready to strain a point to make it appear that he was right. Thus those who had publicly declared their belief that Jesus could cure them, became in some measure interested parties ; so that between the real physical effect produced on them, and their own goodwill to make it appear greater, a bystander might easily be led to think a miracle had been done. But a divine power could not need such a belief on the part of the applicants ; on the contrary, one would rather expect it to be displayed where there was no such belief, in order that the miracle might be more indisputable.

V. The answers usually given by Jesus were of such a nature as to dismiss the applicants without any injury to his own credit, whatever might be the result. Matt. viii. 13, "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." ix. 29, "According to your faith be it unto you." xv. 23, "And his disciples besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us . . . 28, Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Mark x. 52, "Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee." John ix. 7, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."

VI. In Matthew and Mark, the *more decided* miracles, such as raising the dead, curing the blind, &c., are admitted to have been done in secret. Matt. viii. 4, "Jesus saith unto him, (the leper,) See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest," &c. ix. 30, "And Jesus straightly charged them, (the blind men,) saying, See that no man know

it." Mark v. 43, "And he charged them straitly that no man should know it" (the raising of Jairus's daughter). vii. 36, "And he charged them that they should tell no man" (the cure of a deaf and dumb man). It is generally added, that notwithstanding the secrecy of the affair itself, the *report* of it was soon published abroad. Now, since the best authorities, Jesus himself and those present, must have been silent, (for it can hardly be supposed that his immediate followers so boldly disobeyed him,) it may be fairly doubted whether the report, which by some means got abroad, was exactly true, and consequently whether the stories before us, founded probably on these reports, (for in none of them do the writers say they were present, or name their authority,) are exactly true; in which doubt we are obliged to bring in other considerations to help us to ascertain the real facts, as has been already attempted. The motive for Jesus's injunction of secrecy is supposed by some to be his fear lest the people should make him a king; but it is remarkable that the only Evangelist who attributes this fear to Jesus, John vi. 15, relates chiefly miracles done in the most public manner, viz., the marriage feast, the feeding of the multitude, the raising of Lazarus, &c.; from which it appears to have been at least his impression, that Jesus did not *in general* seek secrecy for his miracles. Matthew and Mark themselves relate abundance of miracles, of casting out demons, and healing the sick, as performed in the most public manner. The exception, therefore, in the cases alluded to, leaves them open to one or other of these objections:—either that Jesus required the secrecy because the miracle would not bear public inspection; or that the narrators, aware that the miraculous part was a later addition, endeavoured to make the whole appear consistent by saying that it was by Jesus's command that it had been kept secret.

VII. The miracles were chiefly performed among the country people of Galilee, according to Matthew and Mark. The former says, in a loose manner, xxi. 14, "And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them." But with this exception, and that of the fig-tree, he gives no specific account of any one miracle from the arrival of Jesus at Jerusalem till his death. Thus, the miracles of Jesus agree, in one remarkable circumstance, with the majority of those related elsewhere; viz. they were performed among classes least capable of distinguishing between the natural and supernatural.

VIII. When Jesus was asked to do a public miracle in attestation of his divine mission, he not only refused to do it, but did not even appeal to his previous miracles. Matt. xvi. 1—4, "The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and, tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed." Nothing is said of the sign of Jonas in the corresponding place in Mark, viii. 11. A similar but more pointed application is related by John, vi. 30, "They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou, that we may see and believe? What dost thou work? our fathers did eat manna in the desert." The answer is an assertion, not of his miraculous power, but that he himself is the bread of heaven. It is true that Jesus is made to appeal to his miracles in answer to John the Baptist's disciples, and several times in the discourses attributed to him by

John, v. 36, x. 38, xiv. 10. Yet the above instances are sufficient to show that he did not usually rely upon them as the means of convincing opponents. Nor is it a sufficient answer that the applications were made to him in a captious spirit, and were therefore unworthy of notice. The demand of a sign or miraculous attestation has been acknowledged to be reasonable by all asserting the divine authority of Jesus after his own lifetime; consequently, from the days of Matthew and John to our own, Christians have been eager to meet it with plentiful accounts of miracles. Moreover, Jesus himself did not pass over the demand on such a pretext. John ii. 18, "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple," (they were in the temple at Jerusalem,) "and in three days I will raise it up." From the following verses it appears that all about him at the time understood him to mean the real temple, and so Matthew and Mark seem to have understood it; for they each twice quote the saying, without giving the least hint that it had any other sense. Matt. xxvi. 61, xxvii. 40; Mark xiv. 58, xv. 29. John alone says that Jesus meant the temple of his body, allowing, however, that it was only after he was risen from the dead that this sense was attributed to the words. Now, if this were the true version of the matter, that Jesus intended his answer to be unintelligible or deceptive to the actual questioners, and convincing to his own disciples only after his death, he seems to have partially failed; for two out of the three Evangelists, who have mentioned the saying, appear to have been as much in the dark concerning its meaning as the Jews themselves. But if, like the latter, we take the saying in its obvious and literal sense, it shows that Jesus did not, on this occasion at least, object to the demand of a miraculous sign; but by his meeting it



in this manner, rather than by doing a miracle, or by appealing to some noted one already done,\* such as the raising of Lazarus, it is plain that the subsequent custom of referring objectors to these miracles was not adopted by himself. Consequently the genuineness of those parts of his discourses which appeal to his miracles becomes liable to suspicion; especially since other considerations lead us to conjecture that both John and Matthew were in the habit of attributing to Jesus sayings merely representing subsequent ideas and doctrines.

The demand of a sign, in attestation of a claim to the Messiahship, was far from unreasonable, according to current Jewish ideas.† Jehovah himself had prescribed this method of proof to Moses. His rod was to become a serpent, "that they might believe that the Lord God had appeared to him;" and if this did not convince, other signs were appointed, *Exod. iv. 1—9*. Elijah had brought down fire and rain from heaven; Elisha had raised the dead, multiplied oil, cured a leper, fed an hundred men with inadequate supplies, caused iron to swim, and smitten an army with blindness. It was expected that the Messiah would be accredited at least equally with his predecessors. But Jesus replies, "no sign shall be given to this generation." This must have been

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\* The clearing of the temple fixes the date of the conversation to the time after Jesus's last visit to Jerusalem.

† Tanchum, fol. 54. 4. R. Acha said, "Whatsoever things God is about to do, those hath he already done by the hands of just men in the times of the Old Testament. God will raise the dead, which he hath already done by Elias, Elisha, and Ezekiel. He will dry the sea, as was done by Moses. He will open the eyes of the blind, which he did by Elisha, &c."

It appears merely the performance of their duty, that the Sanhedrim should send a deputation to inquire into the nature of the authority claimed by persons assuming the guidance of the people: and if a divine authority were claimed, nothing could be more conformable to the spirit of the laws of Moses, than to require an indubitable miraculous attestation.

understood, and justly, as declining to rest his title to the Messiahship on the ground of miraculous credentials. He might be aware that his expulsions of demons and other cures of healing were not sufficient to put forward as meeting the demand; but how could he have given this answer if he knew that he was commissioned to work miracles, in proof of his mission, fully as decisive as those of his supposed fore-runners? "No sign shall be given to this generation," from the mouth of one who was to raise Lazarus and receive a voice from Heaven expressly as signs, would be both suicidal and false. But the whole is clear when we admit that, whatever real occurrences might form the basis of the miraculous stories in the Gospels, these, being not unparalleled by the performances of other Jewish exorcisors,\* could not furnish the required indisputable credentials of the Messiah: whereas the unrestrained legend might supply them in abundance, and would naturally overlook the inconsistency which this would occasion in reference to the above relic of the history of Jesus.†

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\* Celsus probably gave the general opinion of the more educated classes in his time respecting miracles of healing, exorcising, &c., when he said that abundance of them might be seen in the streets for a few oboli. (Orig. adv. Cels., lib. i. § 68.) "If those things were even true, which are written about cures, and raising of the dead, and a few loaves feeding multitudes, and whatsoever things the apostles have magnified, yet he (Celsus) considers them common by the side of the jugglers' performances, who promise things more wonderful still, and by the side of things executed by the scholars of Egyptians, who in the midst of the market-places, for a few oboli, sell their venerable lessons, expel demons, cure diseases, call upon the souls of heroes, show as sumptuous feasts, cates, and sauces, things which are not such, and put in motion as animals things not really animals, but appearing such by ocular deception. And he says; granting that they do these things, must we account them sons of God, or not rather conclude that these are the pursuits of wicked and unhappy men?"

Paul seems to be conscious that arts of healing were of a comparatively low grade in the scale of divine gifts. 1 Cor. xii. 9, 28.

† The writer of the first Gospel might have endeavoured to obviate this inconsistency as far as his own Gospel was concerned, by the addition, "but

IX. In most of the narratives, the *saying* of Jesus and the incidents leading to it form the most conspicuous part; the accompanying miracle is but a brief echo. "I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house." "Thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour." Therefore, in so far as the narrative preserves any historical reality, this most probably lies in the saying itself, and the circumstances which gave rise to it. The miraculous fulfilment, if true, would have formed the most impressive part of the incident, and would have been related with at least equal emphasis and circumstantiality with the previous portion. Take for instance the case of the Syrophenician woman, Matt. xv. 21—28. The incidents and dialogue are related with much force, and probably with a great degree of truth, including the final answer of Jesus, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." But here, the very point where the greatest interest begins instead of ends, we are dismissed with the careless completion, "and her daughter was made whole from that very hour." How did the disciples know this? for the daughter was at a distance. What messengers arrived from the woman's house, or when did they meet the daughter, and learn the fact? The absence of any means of information of this kind, which must have appeared worth relating, inevitably leads us to infer that they,

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the sign of the prophet Jonas." I incline to consider Mark's version, which omits this, the most probable; because if Jesus did not predict his death and resurrection, the sign of Jonas in reference to this is evidently a later addition. And Jonas could not well be called a sign in any other sense, because he was merely to preach warnings to the Ninevites. Yet if so much were granted that Jesus had added the parallel between himself and Jonas, the above reasoning still applies, for it was still an evasion of the kind of sign which the Pharisees and Jewish expectation demanded.

or the intermediate narrators, learned this important conclusion simply by means of their faith in Jesus. He spake the word, therefore the thing *must* have so happened.

In some cases, particulars are given of what followed the saying; but these we have seen do not confirm us in the idea that there happened any thing really miraculous, but rather the contrary. See chap. viii. p. 267.

The cure of the nobleman's son, John iv., is only an apparent exception. For although it is said that the servants met the nobleman, and gave him a report of what had happened to his son, all this was out of the knowledge of the disciples, unless one of them had gone with the nobleman to obtain proof of the cure; which very circumstance would have formed an important incident in the *real* scene. We have here the omniscience of the novelist, instead of the one-sided or local knowledge which must belong to an eye-witness. The same remark applies to the story of the blind man, John ix. Who was this narrator, and where could he have been, that he knows so well the words and thoughts of so many actors in different places? An ingenious hypothesis might certainly explain how John could place himself in the way of beholding and hearing all that was essential to the story, whilst near Jesus, the man, his neighbours, parents, the Pharisees, &c. But nothing in the narrative indicates the movements of an active reporter of this kind; the more obvious conclusion is one of these: either that the narrative proceeds from a dramatist, or from the Holy Spirit.\*

X. None of those on whom the miracles were said to be performed come forward themselves to attest them in the

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\* The latter would doubtless be the solution of the writer himself: see John xiv. 25; xv. 26. But with the metaphysics of that time, the effect of imagination and the dictates of the Holy Spirit might be easily confounded. The undoubted discrepancies in the Evangelists must destroy



subsequent part of the history, or play any conspicuous part in the affairs of the church, as gathered from the Acts and Epistles. The author of the Gospel of Nicodemus, which appeared at the end of the third century, has endeavoured to remedy the omission by making the centurion, the blind men, &c., give evidence before Pilate; but this forgery only renders the absence of any historical testimony to the same effect the more striking.

XI. None of the miracles produce any effect upon indisputable historical facts; but events go on in a natural course without the slightest symptom of supernatural disturbance. The Romans keep possession of Judea; Jesus is put to death as an innovator; his followers increase like other sects, by means of proselytism. All the miraculous consists of mere accessory incidents, which may be shaken off without hurt to the integrity of profane history, or even to the chief features of the gospel history itself. The career of Jesus is intelligible enough, although none of the cures were really supernatural, although no water were turned into wine, nor any loaves multiplied. The earthquakes and darkness leave not the slightest vestiges in history.\* The utmost political effect

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the hypothesis of a Holy Spirit as the communicator of historical facts. Paley quietly rests the question on the credibility and means of knowledge of the narrators. The doctrine of plenary inspiration would have rendered the greater part of his work unnecessary.

\* The elder Pliny and Seneca have each left a work recording all the great phenomena of nature, earthquakes, comets, eclipses, &c., which they could collect. Seneca *Quæst. Natur.*, l. i. 15; vi. 1; vii. 17. Plin. *His. Nat.*, l. ii. But there is nothing applicable to the narrative of Matthew. Pliny describes a singular paleness of the sun in the year following the death of Cæsar.

Phlegon of Tralles (about A.D. 141), in a passage quoted by Eusebius, said that "in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad (the 18th or 19th year of Tiberius, 32 or 33 A.D. according to common computation), there was an eclipse of the sun, the greatest of any known before. And it was night at the sixth hour of the day, so that the stars appeared in the heavens. And there was a great earthquake in Bithynia, which overturned many

attributed by the Evangelists themselves to the miracles of Jesus, is frequent alarm among the Pharisees, which if not overstated for the sake of dramatic interest, might very well proceed from other causes. It has been shown that the adherence of some followers by no means requires the admission of a real supernatural power.

A miracle producing some effect which must have been noticed in the history of Judea,—the sudden dispersion of a legion, the removal of a procurator, the subversion of buildings, for instance—would have appeared to obtain some collateral support; although in such a case also we must have weighed the greater probability of natural or supernatural causes. But all the parts of the Gospel history confirmed by cotemporary writers, the government of Pilate, the death of John the Baptist, the features of the Jewish sects, &c., are simply natural. Follow the vein of supernatural throughout, and it either shuns or breaks itself upon the historical strata. When the narrative brings Jesus into connexion with Herod the tetrarch, the former does not convert him by a miracle, or brave his power as an invulnerable prophet, but retires with his followers. At Jerusalem, nothing occurs beyond a temporary enthusiasm of the multitude. The declaration attributed to him on his apprehension, that he could have obtained twelve legions of angels by prayer, only reminds us more forcibly of the absence of any collision of miraculous power with the powers of the world.

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houses in Nice." But Lardner, after a careful review of all that had been said on this passage, concludes both that Phlegon had no intention of alluding to the events accompanying Christ's passion, and that his passage cannot apply to them. Indeed the oldest objection is decisive, that an eclipse of the sun could not happen at the time of the passover, i.e. of the *new moon*. Heath. Test., ch. xiii. According to the calculations of some able astronomers referred to by Lardner (Dr. Sykes' Dissertation on the Eclipse of Phlegon), there was a great eclipse of the sun in November A.D. 29, in the *first* year of the 202nd Olympiad.

It is certainly not inconceivable that a divine power should have exerted itself only in such a manner, and on such occasions, as to avoid all contact with the political history of the time; but this mode of exertion leaves the evidence destitute of a very important kind of proof.

XII. The supposed miracles had no effect on many of those who lived in the time of Jesus, and were most capable of appreciating them. John vii. 5, "For neither did his brethren believe in him." xii. 37, "But though he had done so many miracles before them (the people), yet they believed not on him." Matt. xi. 20, "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." Mark vi. 52, "For they (the disciples) considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened." By comparing this with Mark xvi. 14, it is plain that the hardness of heart meant a backwardness to believe the miracle, although the account purports that it had just been done before them. Now, an imperfect belief immediately after the event, growing into certainty long afterwards, is just contrary to the process one would expect to see if a miracle had really been done. Then the conviction would be most vivid on the first sight of it. At first the senses declare unequivocally and impartially the impressions made upon them; but the memory seldom preserves long those impressions distinct and unmixed. Passion, prejudice, and interest, gradually diminish, add to, or confuse the image; till, at last, the view remaining in the mind, instead of being a faithful picture of the real event, is one formed by the joint contributions of the memory, the imagination, and the feelings. Thus, from the instance referred to, it appears that even the disciples had some difficulty in believing the miracles at first; and since the disbelief of them came to be stigmatized as hardness of heart, we may infer that their more confident

assertion of them in later times was owing to a persuasion that scepticism on this point was a betrayal of the cause of their Master.\*

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\* The object of this work being chiefly an examination of historical evidence, it does not enter into the arguments arising from general considerations concerning the nature of miracles, and their agreement or disagreement with the rest of the divine government. But lately some thoughts of this kind have been suggested to me, by an eminent writer of the present day, which deserve much attention.

The improved science of modern times proves that disease and premature death are the penalties annexed to the abuse of men's powers, and are, in reality, a benevolent provision in order to restrict men to those limits which allow of their greatest moral and physical enjoyment. To remove the penalty in any individual case is so far a cancelling of the general divine law; but to impart such knowledge as shall prevent the penalty from being incurred again, is consistent with it.

It may be presumed that the different parts of the divine plans harmonize with each other, and, therefore, that credentials given by the Deity would not consist in infringements of his own laws.

Christ, by raising the widow's son at Nain, removed the natural penalty of the youth's own ill-regulated conduct, or that of his fathers. But if he had taken that occasion to make known the connexion established between imprudence and suffering, by explaining the causes which led to that young man's premature death, he would have acted in accordance with the divine laws, he would have saved many widows' sons from the same fate, and would have given a more permanent and convincing proof of his being a man sent from God.

Most of the miracles attributed to Christ are of the same kind, viz. the removal of natural penalties. If, on opening the book which records his claims as a divine messenger, we were to find, instead of these stories of such difficult verification, declarations of the causes of blindness, fever, and palsy, and warnings to mankind to abstain from the courses which lead to such evils, the book would carry with it an evidence increasing with the lapse of ages; since the possession of such knowledge by a person in the age, country, and circumstances of Christ, would be as miraculous as any of the works referred to: and all readers, on finding that the results of the most advanced stages of human knowledge had been anticipated by the peasant of Galilee, must themselves exclaim, "Whence had this man this knowledge, having never learned?" and, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent by God, for no man could have this wisdom unless God were with him."

It is said that the moral teaching of Christ presents evidence of this kind, which subject will be considered.



## CHAPTER X.

REMARKS ON THE MIRACLES IN THE ACTS OF THE  
APOSTLES.

IF the miracles attributed to Jesus himself be false, the same is likely to be the case with those attributed to the apostles, for they professed to derive whatever power they had from him. Nevertheless, it is more satisfactory to examine such direct evidence as there is for these also.

This evidence rests mainly on the testimony of the author of the Acts, who himself intimates that he is the same as the author of the third Gospel, and who has been supposed by all antiquity to be Luke the companion of Paul, a man of more education, as appears by his style, than most of the first disciples. If he be the same as Silas, which there are some grounds for supposing,\* it seems that he joined the church previously to the year 52; for Silas is first mentioned, Acts xv. 22, in connexion with Barsabas, as being a chief man among the brethren. Barsabas was one of those who had companied with the apostles in the lifetime of Jesus, Acts i. 21; but it is unlikely that Silas (or Luke) had done so, because in his Gospel he only lays claim to having had his information from those who were eye-witnesses from the beginning, and not to have been an eye-witness himself. Therefore it is probable that neither was he an eye-witness of the transactions immediately after the death of Jesus; nor, indeed, till a short time before the council at Jerusalem,

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\* See chap. v.

A.D. 52, since there are many chasms in his history previously to that date. The events up to that time must therefore be considered mainly as what the author had learned from others. Although there be not proof that he inserted fictions knowingly, yet from his relating the stories of the healing of Malchus's ear, and the angel in the garden, it appears at least that he was not in the habit of investigating closely stories brought to him, provided they appeared honourable to the common cause; and it has been shown that he indulged in the practice common to the historians of his time, of inventing suitable speeches for his personages.

It is plain from the Acts that the author himself took a zealous part in the affairs of the church, and it was therefore to be expected that he should share the prevailing disposition to do honour to the cause by publishing its miracles; accordingly, almost every transaction has a miraculous turn given to it. When Stephen is condemned, he sees Jesus in the heavens; when Philip goes to Gaza, it is by command of an angel of the Lord; when he approaches the chariot of the eunuch, it is also by command of the Spirit; and when he leaves him, he is caught away by the Spirit, and found at Azotus.\* Before Peter and Cornelius meet, Cornelius has a vision to tell him to send for Peter, and Peter has a vision to prepare him for the message. The angel of Cornelius goes into such particulars as to give him the address of Peter at Simon the tanner's, which he might very well have learned from common report, or from any one of the Christians in Judea. When Paul reaches the coast of Asia opposite to Macedonia, a vision appears to him in the night to tell him

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\* The distance from Gaza to Azotus is about thirty miles, a less journey than many of those performed by Jesus and the apostles; so that the chief object of this miracle appears to have been to increase the faith of the eunuch, or of the readers of the Acts.

to go over into Macedonia. When Herod dies of a disease, he is smitten by an angel of the Lord.

In this last instance, we have the means of comparing Luke's account with that of another author, nearly cotemporary. Josephus relates thus the death of Herod Agrippa :

Antiq., book xix., chap. viii., sect. 2, "Now, when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower; and there he exhibited shows in honour of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival, a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which shows, he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time, the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him: and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god: and they added, Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature. Upon this, the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery. But, as he presently afterwards looked up, he saw an owl sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him;\* and fell into the deepest sorrow. A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, 'I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life, while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death. But I am bound to accept of what Providence allots, as it pleases God; for we have by no means lived ill, but in a splendid and happy manner.' When he said this, his pain was become violent. Accordingly he was carried into the palace; and the rumour went abroad every where that he would certainly die in a little time. But the multitude presently sat in sackcloth, with their wives and children, after the law of their country, and besought God for the

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\* When Agrippa was bound by order of Tiberius, an owl appeared on the tree against which he leaned; and a German fellow-prisoner foretold to him that he would soon recover his liberty, but that, when the bird appeared again, he would only have five days to live. Antiq., xviii. 6.

king's recovery. All places were also full of mourning and lamentation. Now the king rested in a high chamber, and, as he saw them below lying prostrate on the ground, he could not forbear weeping. And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh year of his reign."

Notwithstanding the owl, it is plain from this that there was nothing miraculous in the matter ; but it was very easy to relate the story in such a way as to make it appear so. Luke has done this more completely than Josephus, by presenting us with an angel instead of an owl, and by leaving us to suppose that Herod gave up the ghost *immediately*,\* whilst it appears from Josephus that he was ill five days before he died.

From an author thus evidently disposed to see ordinary occurrences in a miraculous light, capable of exaggerating, or of receiving the exaggerations of others, and also of calling in his own imagination to round off the discourses of his personages, marvellous stories must be received with much suspicion. It is not such testimony that can make us believe in contradiction to our own experience of nature : and the greater part of the miracles in the Acts rest exclusively on such testimony ; for not one of the miraculous incidents there recorded is confirmed (it is doubtful if even alluded to) in the Epistles or other writings of the apostles.

The first miracle, after the ascension, is the descent of the Spirit in the shape of cloven tongues, The gift of tongues. like as of fire, on the day of Pentecost. The Jews believed that their prophets spoke and acted under the influence of a divine inspiration coming upon them on certain occasions, called the Spirit of the Lord, or the Holy Ghost. In the

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\* Acts xii. 23, " And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory : and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."



prophet Joel, it is promised that, in the future greatness of Israel, in addition to peace and fertility of soil, the Spirit should be given abundantly.

Joel. ii. 28, " And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions : and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered ; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." See also Isaiah xlv. 3.

The disciples, believing that their own times were those of the accomplishment of the prophecies, applied to their own society these promises of the spirit. In circumstances favourable to excitement, at public meetings, on solemn occasions, at the baptism of new converts, and the like, the belief in and expectation of the influence was sufficient to bring the minds of some to a state of ecstasy, which was considered to be its actual manifestation ; in this state the agitation of the mind found a vent in certain incoherent expressions, which being supposed to be the outpouring of the Spirit, and yet, in fact, being unintelligible, were called an unknown language. These fits, natural in some, were soon imitated and improved upon by others, for the sake of attracting attention. Some words of real foreign, or kindred languages, having found their way into these rhapsodies, a report might easily be spread that the Holy Spirit gave the power of speaking in other languages. It is very probable that some excitement of this sort did take place at the assembly of the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and Luke has given the improved account which came to him some years afterwards. The rushing mighty wind might be a real circumstance exaggerated ;

the visible tongues of fire a later addition ; the speech of the multitude, v. 7—12, the invention of Luke himself ; and that of Peter what he considered Peter would have said on such an occasion, and which probably does in its main features represent Peter's sentiments correctly, since Luke (or Silas) must have often heard him.

There is no evidence elsewhere that the apostles had acquired supernaturally the use of other languages. That generally spoken throughout the eastern provinces of the Roman empire was the Greek ;\* and owing to the continual intercourse with Roman tax-gatherers and soldiers, even the lower classes of Jews dwelling in towns could not but acquire some rude knowledge of it. Campbell acknowledges that the Greek of the New Testament is a " barbarous idiom."† " The writings of the New Testament are such as, in respect of style, could not have been written but by Jews, and hardly even by Jews superior in rank and education to those whose names they bear." . . . " The homeliness of their diction, when criticised by the rules of grammarians and rhetoricians, is what all the most learned and judicious of the Greek fathers frankly owned." " If any one contends," says Erasmus,‡ " that the apostles were inspired by God with the knowledge of all tongues, and that this gift was perpetual in them, since every thing which is performed by a divine power is more perfect, according to Saint Chrysostom, than what is performed either in the ordinary course of nature or by the pains of man, how comes it to pass that the language of the apostles is not only rough and unpolished, but imperfect ; also confused, and sometimes even plainly solecising and absurd ? for we cannot possibly deny what the fact itself declares to be true.—When

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\* Græca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus : Cicero pro Archia.

† Dissertations, vol. i. p. 20.

‡ Annot. in Act, x. 38.

the apostles write in Greek, they borrow much from their own Hebrew; as at this day, men of little learning, when they talk Latin, always mix somewhat with it of their native tongue."

Origen says,\* "The Jewish prophets and the disciples of Jesus renounced all artful composition of words, and what the Scripture calls man's wisdom, and fleshly wisdom." "But the apostles being sensible of their imperfection in this respect, and that they had not been educated in human learning, own themselves rude in speech, though not in knowledge."† Jerome says,‡ "There appear in Paul's Epistles several words peculiar to the dialect of his own city and country. We repeat, that Paul spoke truly, and not by way of humility, when he called himself 'rude in speech, but not in knowledge.' For his tongue is unable to express his deep and abstruse meanings. And feeling himself what he speaks about, he cannot transfer it to others' ears in clear language. Being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and learned enough in his vernacular language, he was unable to express his deep meanings in another tongue, nor did he take much pains concerning words when he had made his meaning safe."§ "In this place, (Col. ii. 23,) there is a superfluous conjunction; which error we find the apostle to have committed in many places, owing to his unskilfulness in the rules of grammar."|| "We do not attack the apostle when we notice his solecisms, but rather defend him, since we show that it must have been by the power of God, and not by grace of speech, that he evangelized the world. . . . He therefore who commits solecisms in his words, who cannot translate an inverted construction of words, and finish a sentence, boldly claims to himself wisdom," &c. ¶

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\* Cont. Cels. t. vii.

† Ad algas.

|| Ad algas.

† Philoc. cap. iv.

§ Hieron. in Gal. cap. vi.

¶ In Eph. iii.

In the Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul says that he speaks with tongues more than they all ; so that it is probable that he possessed the gift in at least an equal degree with any of the other apostles or converts ; yet if the above testimony of Origen and Jerome can be trusted, his knowledge of Greek, the most necessary tongue, was no more than what might be acquired by natural means by one in his station, certainly less perfect than what might have been expected to be given by divine inspiration. Moreover, though he does not absolutely condemn the exercise of this or any other supposed gift of the Spirit, he speaks of it on the whole in a depreciating manner. "I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue," 1 Cor. xii. 10 ; and intimates pretty clearly that the gift was becoming an annoyance : "If, therefore, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned and unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" v. 23. He says, that "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not ;" but he does not attribute to them the use for which Luke supposes them to have been given, viz. to preach to nations of other tongues. This silence of Paul, when treating expressly on the subject, leads us to think that no such use had been found to result from the supposed gift : consequently that the power was never given.

The lame  
man.

The cure of the lame man by Peter and John can be considered miraculous only on the strength of the statement that he had been lame from his birth, which was not easy for Luke to know in the case of a man forty years old. Many a beggar receiving alms on the score of lameness is yet able, in some degree, to use his legs when helped up, and on a sudden impulse. A similar story is told of Paul, ch. xiv. ; but here it is added that Paul looked at



him, and perceived that he had faith to be healed; which was probably the case also in the former instance. The whole story of the lame man, and of the subsequent examination of Peter and John, bears the appearance of the warm and coloured representation of the partizan, rather than the cool account of an impartial observer. The length and vigour of the speeches ascribed to Peter, who is said to be filled with the Holy Ghost, compared with the tameness and want of argument on the part of his opponents, shows too evidently a disposition to set off the apostle to advantage. Even though the man who had been healed were present, such men as Annas and the rulers would surely have been clever enough to find something to say against it; but, according to Luke, the presence of the man confounds them, they send the apostles aside, and confer among themselves, saying, "What shall we do to these men? for, indeed, that a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it." This is more than a candid admission on the part of Annas and the council; it is the exaggeration of a zealous defender of the apostles: for the miracle could not be manifest to *all* in Jerusalem; and that it was a real miracle, no one was obliged to say, or could say properly, until the man had been further examined, and the nature of his previous lameness as well as the reality of his cure had been better ascertained. The confident and unaltered tone of Luke in relating what was said in the secret council, shows that he is here using the dramatic historian's privilege of attributing thoughts and speeches to his characters; and, as was to be expected, he turns it to good account on behalf of the apostles. This appears in nearly all the speeches. The first question of the rulers is, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" which is no more than a convenient introduction to Peter's oration concerning the

power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This conclusion, "There is *none other name under heaven given among men* whereby we must be saved," betrays rather the enlarged notions concerning Christ's dominion belonging to a companion of Paul, writing long after the admission of the Gentiles, than to Peter at such an early period, when he had as yet no idea that the Gentiles were to receive the word of God. The same thing appears more plainly in the former speech attributed to Peter, "Unto *you first* (i. e. the Jews), God having raised up his son Jesus, hath sent him to bless you," &c. Luke here evidently forgets that he had not yet arrived at that part of his history, where Peter, to the astonishment of himself and of those with him (Acts x. 34, 45), first found that others besides the Jews were to receive the word of God.

Since Luke thus appears to embellish so freely in his account of the speeches,\* it is unavoidable to infer that he does so, in some degree, in that of the facts; especially as they were, in this case, such as he had probably not witnessed himself.

Ananias  
and  
Sapphira.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira may be accounted for, in great part, by the effect which spiritual terrors have been known to have upon persons both religious and weak-minded. The same ardour of faith, arising from the expectation of the coming of the Lord, which led the early church to acknowledge the necessity of giving up all temporal possessions, would render such terrors amongst them peculiarly strong; and upon minds which had undergone a struggle between conscience and the natural love of

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\* In these speeches, Acts iii. iv., occur many of the most forcible testimonies to the resurrection of Jesus. The above criticism confirms the view that these are to be considered rather as the testimonies of Luke, than of Peter himself.

property, and remaining oppressed with the consciousness of duplicity, we can imagine that the menaces of the apostle must have fallen with tremendous effect. This, however, would hardly explain the death and burial of both parties within a few hours of Peter's speech; but here there may be an exaggeration similar to that in the case of Herod. Their death, happen when it might, would be supposed by the believers to be in punishment of their fraud upon the church, and the story would soon be told in such a way as to make the connexion clear. Simply in the natural progress of tradition, the most interesting points tend to approach each other without reference to date. The attempt to obtain the merit and privileges attached to an unqualified surrender of property, without honestly performing the condition, was such a dangerous example to a society living in common, that Ananias and Sapphira would appear fully to deserve their heavy doom, and the narrator would feel interested in depicting it in the most fearful colours.

The release of the apostles from the common Release  
from prison. prison bears the appearance of fiction, from its being a perfectly useless miracle. It cannot be imagined that an angel, on releasing the apostles, would have the simplicity to send them to the temple, where they were so likely to be taken again, as we are told they were the next morning. The effect of the miracle is, that the apostles are not found where they had been left, but in another place. It is unworthy of the divine power to suppose that it would choose to display itself by such a mere hide-and-seek affair.

A more complete story of the same kind is told of Peter alone, Acts xii. James, the brother of John, having been put to death, Peter is imprisoned also; but an angel appears to him in prison, his chains fall off, an iron gate opens of its own accord, Peter rejoins the disciples, the keepers next

morning are put to death, and shortly after Herod dies, apparently from the connexion, in consequence of his attempt. But the disposition to do honour to the apostles might have suggested this story as well as the former. With the exception of the escape of the child from Herod, and of Christ's passing through the crowd on the brow of the hill, it is the only instance in the New Testament of deliverance from enemies by miraculous means; and it seems the more improbable, as Jesus is never represented as expecting such deliverance for himself or his disciples; but, on the contrary, as warning them frequently that he and they must be delivered into the hands of men. Wisdom and harmlessness were to be their means of escape from the midst of wolves, and not a miraculous opening of prison-gates, Matt. x. 16. The emphatic tone of the warnings attributed to Jesus on this point, x. 17, 18; xxiv. 9, indicates strongly that the general experience of the church had recognised that their supposed miraculous powers were of no avail against superior human force. The fates of Stephen and James had furnished melancholy proofs of this. The story of Peter affords perhaps a confirmation rather than contradiction, since the angel is represented as coming secretly, and avoiding all collision with the authorities. Thus the story has the appearance of being the invention of some injudicious partizan, who in his desire to exhibit the triumphs of the church, forgot for a moment that they consisted really in the conquest of the minds and sympathies of men, rather than in miraculous escapes or physical invulnerability.

Conversion  
of Paul.

The important miracle of Paul's conversion is related thus :

Acts ix. 3—19, "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven : and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest



thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, *hearing a voice, but seeing no man.* And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias; and he said, Behold I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus."

The important point, that the men with Paul heard the voice, is contradicted in the speech attributed to Paul, Acts xxii. 9, for there he only says that they saw the light; "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they *heard not* the voice of him that spoke to me."\* In this place, as well as the above, Paul is told to go into Damascus, where he will be told what to do, and

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\* Luke has other instances of carelessness or forgetfulness with respect to his own narratives; e. g. the 40 days after the resurrection, and the instance noticed, p. 308. In this he differs from the fourth evangelist, who shows evident effort to confirm himself.

Ananias there gives him his apostolic commission ; but in the speech before Agrippa, xxvii., Jesus gives him this commission at once from the sky. The story is told thus in the latter place, no doubt to avoid a repetition of the minute details ; yet, strictly, the facts thus become at variance with the foregoing accounts, which shows at least carelessness in the manner of narrating. These inaccuracies of Luke, in his own repetitions of his story, lead us to suspect that there may be some inaccuracies in his first story itself, and that he has represented as real what Paul himself only intended to relate as a vision, adding a few particulars which he found necessary to make the account complete. The recovery of Paul's sight, ver. 17, 18, might be related almost in the same words if understood of spiritual blindness. The light from heaven, and the remonstrance of Jesus, also require but little alteration to restore them to a merely spiritual sense. But as Luke was not with Paul at the time, the chief merit of his version of the affair may belong to Barnabas, who appears to have been the first who related the story, ix. 27, and that on an occasion when he had a sufficient motive to lead him to strain the real facts into an evident miraculous interposition, viz. his desire to prove to the church at Jerusalem that his friend Paul had been duly commissioned by Jesus himself, and might therefore properly be introduced by him as a fellow-labourer with the other apostles. The testimony of Barnabas was readily received concerning a matter so honourable to the church, and probably received some additions afterwards from Paul's other adherents, who were naturally anxious to meet the objection that their leader had not seen Jesus. And from one of these we have the present story.

The change in Paul's mind seems not unnatural. His first indignation against the innovating sect was appeased by the death of Stephen, and the subsequent persecution.

On the road to Damascus he had leisure to reconsider their claims calmly. As a Jew, he himself expected the Messiah; and as a Pharisee, he believed the resurrection of the dead. Why, then, might it not be true that Jesus of Nazareth had been proved to be the Messiah by his resurrection from the dead? The disciples quoted many prophecies as fulfilled by Jesus, and he himself might remember others apparently accomplished by him. The idea once admitted, agitated him incessantly during the journey; he must decide for or against Jesus before reaching Damascus; and during a faintness occasioned by the heat of the sun at noonday, he thought he saw and heard Jesus himself appealing to him. Upon a man of strong imagination, and much given to visions, 2 Cor. xii. 1, it is not surprising that the impression made in such circumstances should be so strong as to influence his whole life. His energy of character permitted him to do nothing imperfectly. During the three years spent at Damascus and in Arabia, from the materials afforded by the Jewish prophets, and by his own meditations and visions, he formed an improved system of Christianity; and, not contented merely to follow in the footsteps of the first disciples, he determined to proceed as a new and special apostle of the Christ or Messiah, to the conversion of the whole world.

The speeches in the Acts cannot be relied on as Paul's own words; for these we must look to his Epistles, and the following are the only passages which they contain, seeming to allude to the event near Damascus:

Gal. i. 15—17, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus."

1 Cor. ix. 1, "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not you my work in the Lord?"

1 Cor. xv. 8, "And last of all, he (Christ) was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

None of which bear out Luke's statement; for the appearance of Jesus, on which Paul founds his claim to the apostleship, might be a vision, as there is reason to suppose it was in the case of James. See chap. vii.

Earthquake at Philippi. The earthquake in the prison of Philippi has several marks of fiction. The keeper prepares to kill himself, before he knows whether the prisoners are fled or not. Paul guesses, in the dark, what the keeper is doing, and calls out in time to save him. This heathen keeper having obtained a light, addresses Paul and Silas with the very Christian phrase, "What must I do to be saved?" Moreover, the two prisoners' release is attributed, not to the earthquake, but to the order of the magistrates the next morning. In Paul's Epistle to the Philippians no allusion is made to this miracle.

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However trifling this kind of criticism may appear, the question of the miraculous origin of the Christian religion depends mainly upon it. Let it be granted that this doctrine ought not to be rejected at once on general arguments respecting the nature of miracles, but that the evidence for it deserves examination. If, after taking the pains to examine, each one of the miraculous incidents appears resolvable, and most probably so, into a pious fiction, a full-grown tradition, or a poetical legend, few metaphysical arguments can be found strong enough to restore plausibility to the doctrine.

But in studying the book of Acts, it is impossible not to see things which contributed much more effectually than any



miracles or tales of miracles to the growth of the religion. The active missionary historian transports us by his earnest narrative into the midst of the infant sect. We see the inward workings, the intense animation, the joyful struggles, of one of those societies, which from time to time, by launching forth some new principles, or new forms of old principles, enliven mankind. The powers of the mind in addition to, and superior to those which suffice for the common current of human affairs, which in isolated individuals find a vent in comparatively inefficient musings or aspirations, when at last awakened simultaneously in bodies of men, impel into action with a force which no established forms, laws, or usages, can ultimately resist. If there be in the exciting ideas a preponderance of truth, or of what harmonizes with the more generous emotions, a society small in its beginning, and low in its station, possesses a tremendous power; and the Pharisees and Sadducees of the day are soon compelled to adopt the advice of some wiser Gamaliel, to let these men alone. The lower classes probably more than the higher, are the fit agents for effecting these moral revolutions, from their being less enslaved by artificial habits of action and thought. In the early church we recognize much that awakens enthusiasm in all ages; the mental enlightenment once the heritage of a few, is to be common to all; the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which aforetime were shed only on special prophets, are now poured abundantly on all flesh, and all the sons and daughters of the spiritual Israel may hope to share in some degree the inspiration of David and Isaiah. The expectations of former times are about to be fulfilled. A state of brotherhood is to prevent individual want. The farthest isles of the Gentiles are to share in the new light. And all imperfections of existing institutions are to be remedied by an approaching restitution of all things, a Messiah's

kingdom which popularizes the chief objects of desire, and acknowledges as the truly opulent those who are rich in faith and good works. The Hebrew recollections with which all this was clothed increased the force of the ideas to the church. The supernatural tales and visions with which their progress was embellished, might serve as accessory stimulants; but with or without them we can see enough to explain how numbers might be led to join those whom they had at first persecuted, and to count all things loss for the sake of the cause which was called that of Christ.

## CHAPTER XI.

ON THE EVIDENCE AFFORDED TO THE MIRACLES BY THE  
APOSTOLIC WRITINGS.

PALEY admits (Evid., part iii. ch. v.), that the apostles appealed less frequently than he himself should have done to the miracles, and he attributes this to the want of a due appreciation of miracles in that age, owing to the general belief in magical agency. But the excuse is insufficient. The church of Rome, whilst denouncing practisers of witchcraft, has been eager enough to set forth its own miracles. The Jews who believed in the magical acts of Pharaoh's magicians, were not the less forward to celebrate the miracles of Moses ; and the disciples, if not admitting the absolute conclusiveness of a miracle as a divine credential, were yet well aware of its great value. For they admit that the Jews frequently required a sign, and the fourth Evangelist makes Jesus say, " Unless ye see wonders and signs, ye will not believe."

The four Gospels and the Acts were written at a comparatively late period, viz. forty years and upwards after the death of Christ, or a distance of time varying from ten to forty years after the events recorded. But most of the Epistles were written earlier, whilst the apostles were administering the affairs of the church, and consequently in the midst of the miraculous period. Moreover, in these writings, at least in the Epistles of Paul, John, James, and the first of Peter, we may fairly calculate upon having very nearly these apostles' own words. Let us collect all the passages in these

Epistles which seem to allude to the miracles of Jesus or of his disciples.

Rom. xv. 17—19: "I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ, in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the spirit of God."

1 Cor. ii. 4: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power."

1 Cor. xii. 8—10: "For to one is given, by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same spirit; to another faith, by the same spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kind of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues."

Ver. 28: "And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

2 Cor. xii. 12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds."

Gal. iii. 5: "He, therefore, that ministereth the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

There are no allusions to miracles in the Epistles of James, John, Jude, or the first of Peter. In the second, or doubtful\* Epistle of Peter, there is an allusion to the prophecy of Peter's death, and to the transfiguration. But the word of prophecy is said to be "more sure."

The above passages in Paul's Epistles show that the church, in general, valued miracles as divine credentials, but they are insufficient to prove that any had been really wrought; for—

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\* The testimony of Eusebius seems almost enough to stamp this Epistle as spurious, since it appears incredible that the early church should have hesitated to receive any real writings of the chief apostle. Nevertheless, it may be appealed to as assisting to show the opinions of the early Christians.



1. Not one *instance* of a miracle is cited ; which is extraordinary in such a large collection of letters to the communities amongst whom they were supposed to have been frequent ; the subject of miracles being occasionally introduced, and Paul being in the habit of frequently appealing to facts within their own knowledge. For instance, he reminds Timothy of the afflictions he met with at Lystra, but never alludes to the healing of the lame man there. The ill health of Trophimus is mentioned, and also that of Timothy, but none of the miraculous cures at Ephesus or Melita. Although Epaphroditus was “ sick nigh unto death,” 2 Phil. ii. 27, Paul seems never to have thought of healing him by miraculous means, but uses language applying to a natural recovery. “ The Lord had mercy on him.” Some of these sicknesses of most faithful companions might have been expected at least to call forth some expressions of regret at the absence of the usual miraculous power, if Paul had really experienced it to be such. He cites his escape from Damascus in a basket, 2 Cor. xi. 33, thus confirming Acts ix. 24 ; but never alludes to any miraculous escape of himself, or of the other apostles. All this certainly amounts only to absence of a particular kind of proof ; but it is that important kind, viz. incidental allusion and confirmation, which in Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ* is so ably shown to support a great portion of the apostolic history.

2. The low rank in which Paul places miracles appears inconsistent with the supposition that those of which he speaks were real and indisputable ones. A manifest suspension of the laws of nature must be one of the most impressive events that could happen to men of any age or country ; and persons commissioned to command or declare such suspensions from time to time could hardly fail to be regarded, in any society, with the highest degree of reverence

ever paid to men ; yet Paul speaks of the Corinthian miracle-workers in this depreciating manner,—“ thirdly, teachers ; *after that*, miracles,” &c. The only explanation seems to be, that he knew that the performances in question were far from being clear miracles, and would not bear to have much stress laid upon them. Hence, although he himself did not wholly reject the pretensions in question, and was willing that they should contribute as far as they might to the service of the church, he urges the Corinthians to seek after gifts, which he was conscious might be claimed with less danger of discredit.

3. It appears that Paul's claims to the apostleship were resisted by a party strong both in numbers and influence, although, according to his own account, he had wrought all the signs of an apostle, including wonders and mighty deeds. Yet in 2 Cor. xi. xii., where he asserts his claim to be considered one of the chiefest apostles most forcibly, he makes very little use of his miracles ; and when speaking even of his adventures at Damascus, does not mention the miracle of his conversion, which would have supplied a most pertinent argument. He urges his descent from Abraham, his labours in the church, his sufferings, his visions, his working the signs of an apostle in all patience, “ in signs, wonders, and mighty deeds,” in supporting his claim ; but to that remarkable event, which his followers in the church afterwards considered to be the best foundation of his apostleship, the appearance of Jesus to him from the heavens, he himself, when he seems to have most need of it, makes no appeal. Moreover, the citation of the signs of an apostle wrought by him is added when he has nearly concluded the subject, and apparently as a subsidiary argument.

Upon the whole, the notices of the miracles found in the apostolic writings are too scanty to agree with the reality of

such numerous and striking miracles as are recorded in the Gospels and the Acts. Such miracles, whilst yet in the eyes and ears of men, must have formed a constant topic of discourse ; and, although much of the Epistles is argumentative and hortatory, we should have expected that some allusions to the miraculous as well as to the ordinary occurrences within the knowledge of the persons addressed, would have found their way into them.

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The lower classes in every age and country, owing to their less acquaintance with physical science, are disposed to see special interventions in ordinary events, and receive miraculous tales readily ; but about the time of Christ, even grave historians, both Greek and Roman, admitted such tales into their most finished compositions. Amongst the Jews, especially, the national temper, creed, and low degree of scientific attainments, promoted the taste for the miraculous ; consequently, their accomplished historian Josephus, although obviously checked by his fear of the Roman philosophical world, and without any other apparent motive than a pure love of the marvellous, could not resist the temptation of introducing abundance of miraculous stories. The historians of the early reformed Jewish, or Christian, churches, were inferior to Josephus in education and literary attainments, wrote under stronger excitement, had in view the interest and honour of their own newly-risen sect, and apparently intended their works for the use of their brethren, who were influenced by the same feelings and opinions as themselves. It was to be expected, then, that these histories should contain a larger proportion of the miraculous than that of Josephus. And as it would be thought very harsh to condemn Josephus as totally unworthy of credit, and to throw aside his history because he partook somewhat of a vice peculiar

to his age and country, so may we also look indulgently upon the inaccuracy or credulity of the evangelic historians,—venerate their compositions as the chief remaining records of the rise of that pure and intrepid sect which has revolutionized the moral world,—admire the highly-wrought feelings and imagination which could enliven Patmos with a glimpse of the kingdom eternal in the heavens, refreshing the common-places of the world with visions unspeakable, and with angels ascending and descending amongst the sons of men,—and respect even their recognized fictions as being, not attempts at gross fraud and imposture, but the aberrations of zeal for an honourable cause, or as exhibiting that tinge of romance which times and events of interest almost unparalleled in history had disposed the minds of men to infuse into the realities of life.

To traverse the evangelic writings, exposing their weak points, and throwing down successively, with the apathy of mere criticism, fictions consecrated by the authority of ages, is a harsh and ungracious task ; and it is only a belief in the expediency of reducing such tales to their due estimation in the opinion of mankind, that can induce minds accustomed to venerate them to enter willingly upon the destructive process. The cause of progressive mental improvement may at length require that such narrations should be placed amongst the things of romance rather than of history : but this being done, the imagination may still delight itself by contemplating them in what now appears to be their true and proper light ; and the more freely, from its being now unchecked by the necessity of explaining and reconciling those absurdities and inconsistencies which must belong to them when viewed as matters of fact. Many of the finer thoughts and feelings of mankind find a vent in fiction, expressed either by painting, poetry, or the poetic tale ;



and the perception of historical inaccuracy does not prevent our sharing the thoughts and feelings which have embodied themselves in this manner. The monotheist of the present day feels awakened in himself the conceptions of the beautiful belonging to ancient Greece, when viewing the varied and graceful forms of the council of Olympus : the Protestant, who regards monachism as a social evil, and who sees amongst the fathers of the church men of character and claims worse than doubtful, may yet appreciate the feeling which led men to tread in cloistered cells as on holy ground, and to attribute supernatural influence to the relics and images of martyrs and saints : and the critical inquirer, who sees in the mother of Jesus merely the obscure Jewish matron, may yet comprehend the mixture of devotion and chivalry which gradually raised homage into adoration, and depicted her with the placid and majestic features of the Virgin Mother of God. In like manner, whilst recognizing the true character of the evangelic fables, we may still discover in them and share the feelings from which, for the most part, they sprung,—respect and attachment towards a character of unwonted power and excellence. A rude age expressed its perception of moral ascendancy by decking it with those ornaments which were then considered to be its appropriate and deserved accompaniments,—miracles, wonders, and signs ; the followers of the Reformer of Galilee endeavoured to express their own sentiments towards him, and to excite the same in others, by attributing to him the command over nature, and by representing him as ascending to the right hand of God. The modern observer has learned to distinguish more correctly the boundaries of the moral and physical worlds, and can appreciate superiority in the one, without ascribing to it an extraordinary control over the other. Nevertheless, he may be able to understand, feel, and translate the rude but em-

phatic language of former ages ; and, in the delineations of Jesus healing the sick, stilling the tempest, walking on the sea, or transfigured on the mount, may contemplate a fact of no small interest or importance, viz. the deep and solemn reverence which mental and moral power, unassisted by grosser means of influence, had been able in a remote age and country to inspire, and may thus refine the false glare of the miraculous thrown around Jesus into a more serene and steady light.

## CHAPTER XII.

## ON THE PROPHECIES.

SOME of the incidents in the life of Jesus appeared to agree with detached sentences in different parts of the Jewish Scriptures. This confirmed the belief of his disciples, that he was, as he claimed to be, the Messiah whom those Scriptures foretold. And returning to them with this prepossession, they were able, by straining the facts a little on one side, and the meaning of their Scriptures on the other, to find in almost every page some fresh coincidences. A new and intense interest was thus imparted to the revered but familiarized writings; words and sentences, fallen through the lapse of time into dry forms, were vivified by the discovery of a mysterious connexion with present things; coincidences the most doubtful were magnified into fulfilled prophecies; and imagination found abundance of connexions which common sense alone would never have discovered.

From the confidence and frequency with which the apostles directed inquirers to search the Scriptures for the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus, it seems clear that they relied upon the fulfilment of prophecy as their strongest argument.\*

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\* The comparative infrequency of the appeals to miracles proves that they were less relied on. This neglect of the miracles is the more remarkable, since it is evident that the apostles needed all the arguments they could find, many of the Jews themselves resisting the evidence of prophecy, Acts xiii. 45; xix. 9; xxviii. 24. A tacit, although unintentional, slight seems to be cast upon the evidence from miracle by Irenæus, when he says that he who laboured amongst the Gentiles had a harder task, because they had not the Scriptures, and that the faith of the Gentiles was more *generous*. See note, page 88.

Luke xxiv. 25—27: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scripture the things concerning himself."

John v. 39: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

Acts iii. 18: "But those things which God before had revealed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."

xvii. 2, 3: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, (the Jews of Thessalonica,) and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ."

Ver. 11: "These (the Jews of Berea) were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

See also Acts ii. 16; iii. 22—24; vii. 52; viii. 35; x. 43; xiii. 27, 32, 33; xviii. 28; xxvi. 22, 27; xxviii. 23; Luke xxiv. 44, 45; John v. 46, 47; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4, &c.

These arguments of the apostles were addressed chiefly to Jews. But since we are able to read the Jewish Scriptures as well as the Jews of that time, we can put ourselves into the same position for feeling and appreciating the force of an argument on which the apostles laid so much stress. Let us, then, for a time imagine ourselves in the place of the Jews of Berea, and follow the apostle's urgent exhortation to search the Old Testament whether these things were so, i. e. whether Jesus of Nazareth was he of whom Moses and the prophets wrote.

Let us first examine all the passages which the apostles and evangelists themselves have quoted.

Matt. i. 23: "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Isaiah vii. 14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you



a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." From ch. viii. 3, 4, it is plain that the writer is speaking of his own child.

Matt. ii. 6: "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel."\*

Micah v. 2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been (or are) from of old, from everlasting." In verse 6, this personage "shall relieve us from the Assyrian;" and in other respects the description does not agree with Jesus, who never ruled Israel.

Matt. ii. 15: "And he was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Hosea xi. 1: "When *Israel* was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."†

\* See note \*, page 110.

† The manifest absurdity of supposing that these texts could have any reference to Jesus has led to the opinion that Matthew only intended to quote them by way of illustration or accommodation. But this was very different from what the church usually meant by saying that the Scriptures were fulfilled; and there is every appearance that the phrase "then was fulfilled," in Matthew, was intended to have the same kind of meaning as that which Peter and Paul gave to their quotations when they argued from the fulfilment of prophecy. It does, indeed, seem impossible that any one who examined the context could seriously intend to represent these passages as prophecies fulfilled by Jesus; but the probability is that Matthew never thought of this kind of critical inquiry. His incorrectness of quotation seems to show that he did not even take the trouble to refer to the passages in question, but quoted them from memory. The Jews had given him

Matt. ii. 17: "Then (on the slaughter of the infants) was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children."

Jerem. xxxi. 15: "Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy." The writer speaks of the return of the Jews from captivity, during which, the land of Israel, represented under the name of Rachel their ancestress, wept for the loss of her children, the Jews.

Matt. ii. 23: "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

This is not to be found in the Old Testament. The passage most resembling it is Judges xiii. 7, "For the child shall be a Nazarite to God," spoken of Samson.\*

Matt. iii. 2: "For this (John the Baptist) is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Isaiah xl. 3: This verse is part of a joyful exhortation to the Jews on their return from captivity. The protection of their God then became evident, and they are therefore told "to behold their God."

Matt. iv. 13: "And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The

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the example of applying the Scriptures to the Messiah, in defiance of common sense; and there is some evidence that they had so applied Hos. xi. 1.

\* See note †, page 110.

land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

Isaiah ix. 1: "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."\*

The passage seems to be part of a description of the times of Josiah. Compare Is. viii. 19 to ix. 7, with 2 Kings xxiii. 24, 25. Josiah extirpated the familiar spirits, wizards, and idols, "and like unto him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him." The passage in Isaiah urges the people to leave the wizards and familiar spirits, and to seek the law and testimony: it tells them that a great light hath shined upon them as they walk in darkness; that unto them a child is born, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, (Josiah was only eight years old when he began to reign,) that "his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,† &c., and that of the in-

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\* Grotius supposes the *light affliction* to be the transportation of the inhabitants of Naphtali, Galilee, Ijon, and several other cities, by Tiglath-pileser, 2 Kings xv. 29; the *more grievous affliction* to be the captivity of Israel under Salmaneser, 2 Kings xvii. and xviii.; and the *child* to be Hezekiah.

† The word God, perhaps, formed only one syllable of the name in Hebrew, as in Immanuel, or God with us. Grotius conjectures that instead of "counsellor, the mighty God," we should read "a consuler of the mighty God." This would agree with either Hezekiah or Josiah, who both turned to the Lord with all their heart.

crease of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice." The excess of panegyric affords ground for conjecturing that the passage was written in the time of Josiah. It will be shown that the book of Isaiah contains, probably, many fragments written at different times.

Matt. viii. 16, 17: "And healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

Isaiah liii. 4: "Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Whoever be the personage intended, it is plain that Matthew has not only quoted incorrectly, but given quite a different sense to that of the writer of Isaiah; for the latter speaks of the sorrows undergone by the person himself,—Matthew, of the infirmities and sicknesses which Jesus removed from others.

Matt. xii. 18: "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles," &c.

Isaiah xlii. 1: This is a description of Israel or Jacob under the name of the Lord's servant. See chap. xli. 8; xlii. 19, 25; xliii. 1.

Matt. xiii. 14: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive," &c.

Isaiah vi. 9: The writer is here describing the inattention of the people to their prophets, from the death of Uzziah to the captivity. Ver. 1—11.

Matt. xv. 7: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophecy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me."

Isaiah xxix. 13: This description was intended to apply to



the writer's own time, because in the continuation, chap. xxx., the people are reprov'd for seeking assistance from Egypt.

Matt. xxi. 4 : "All this (the entry into Jerusalem) was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

Zech. ix. 9 : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold thy king cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Compare this with the following passages of Zechariah, ch. iii. 8, 9 : "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee : for they are men wondered at : for behold, I will bring forth my servant the *branch*. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua ; upon one stone shall be seven eyes ; behold I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." ix. 6—10 : "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain ? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain ; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house ; his hands shall also finish it ; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things ? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven ; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." vi. 11—13 : "Then take silver and gold, and make crowns,

and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedeck, the high priest ; and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the *Branch* ; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord : even he shall build the temple of the Lord ; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and he shall be a priest upon his throne : and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

It is clear that Zerubbabel is the person intended in all these passages. He was a "branch" of the house of David, 1 Chron. iii. 19, and might very naturally be considered by the returned Jews as their lawful king. One object of the book of Zechariah seems to be to advance his pretensions. But he could not assume the regal state under the Persian rule, and was obliged to limit himself in public to an humble and pacific demeanour ; therefore his friend and poet Zechariah asserts his claim to the homage of his countrymen, notwithstanding his apparently low estate. According to Grotius (Annot. in Zech.), instead of "thy king cometh," the Hebrew might very well be read "thy king hath come ;" and he is described as riding upon an ass instead of a horse, not only from modesty, but also for the sake of showing a pacific intention ; the ass being an animal of peace, and the horse of war. The title, "having salvation," or Saviour, (Sept. σωσων,) was given very commonly to national deliverers.\*

Matt. xxii. 43 : "He (Jesus) saith unto them, How then doth David in the spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool ?"

Psalm cx. : This Psalm seems to be a fragment of a complimentary address to some person, to whom it gives the com-

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\* See Judges iii. 9 ; 2 Kings xiii. 5.

mon Jewish title, My Lord. See 1 Kings xviii. 7, 13, and Judges vi. 13. It speaks of his warlike greatness, but has nothing applicable to Jesus. When the original occasion of it was forgotten, it was probably considered to have reference to the Messiah, for want of any other apparent meaning. It might have been an ode addressed by David to Saul. The last verse may be explained in this way: Saul was known to be jealous of the authority of the high priest, to which dignity he himself could have no claim, not being of the family of Aaron; the writer therefore flatters him with the title of a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was not a common priest, but also *king* of Salem.

Matt. xxiv. 15, 16: "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains."

Daniel ix. 27: There are many clear allusions in Daniel to the profanation of the sanctuary by Antiochus. This most obscure part of the book most likely refers also to the same event. There is nothing in the context to fix the meaning of the passage to the desolation under the Romans. See chap. xiv. on Daniel.

Matt. xxvi. 31: "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

Zech. xiii. 7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." The writer, probably Jeremiah,\* begins here to describe the

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\* That the last five chapters of Zechariah belong to Jeremiah is inferred, —1stly, from the similarity of style; 2dly, from the prophecy against Assyria, x. 11, which could not proceed from Zechariah, who lived under

miseries of the captivity, which he closes with a promise of miraculous vengeance on the Jews' enemies. The king of Judah is frequently called a shepherd or pastor. See Zech. xi. 3—5; Jer. xxv. 34. The words "man that is my fellow" are in the Septuagint *επι ανδρα πολιτην μου*, the man, my fellow citizen. The sword would not spare even the fellow citizen of God, i. e. the Jew who inhabited Jerusalem, God's own city.

Matt. xxvi. 56: "But all this was done (the apprehension of Jesus), that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Dan. ix. 26: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." See remark on Matt. xxiv. 15.

In Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms, there are abundant allusions to real or emblematic personages in distress; but, as will be shown, in none of them can the meaning be fixed to the case of Jesus.

Matt. xxvii. 9: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potters' field, as the Lord appointed me."

Zech. xi. 12—13: The writer seems to be describing the little regard paid by the children of Israel to the Lord, which was the reason of his breaking his covenant with them. There is nothing in the context to fix the meaning of these verses to the Messiah. The coincidence of the thirty pieces of silver and the potters' field would be, however, very remarkable, if there were not reason to suspect Matthew of having accommodated his narrative to this verse; for none of the other Evangelists mention thirty pieces of silver, or the potters' field. Mark, xiv. 11, and Luke, xxii. 5, merely say that Judas covenanted for money; and in Acts i. 18, it is

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the Persian empire; 3dly, from Matthew's quoting Zech. xi. 13, as part of Jeremiah.



said that Judas, not the priests, bought "a field" with the money.

Mark i. 2: "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee," &c. (applied to John the Baptist).

Malachi, chap. iii. and iv., foretels the coming of a messenger of the Lord, and a day of vengeance on the wicked. This is one of those passages which produced the popular idea of a Messiah, and probably contributed to the undertaking of Jesus. But it does not correspond throughout with events in the time of Jesus. iii. 4—5: "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years, and I will come near to you to judgment." iv. 5: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Mark xiv. 27: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

See remark on Matthew xxvi. 31.

Mark xv. 28: "And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors."

Isaiah liii. 12: "And he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." This was spoken of Jacob or Israel. See chap. xiii.

Luke i. 69: "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us."

Luke ii. 32: "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of my people Israel."

Isaiah xlii. 6; and xlix. 6: In both places, Jacob or Israel seems to be intended. See chap. xiii.

Luke iii. 4: "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness," &c.

See remark on Matthew iii. 2.

Luke iv. 17, 18: "He (Jesus) found the place where it was written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Isaiah lxi. 1: The writer seems to refer to himself. The time intended by him is plainly that of the return from captivity, from verse 4; "and they shall build the old wastes, and they shall raise up the former desolations."

Luke vii. 27: "This (John the Baptist) is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger *before thy face*, which shall prepare *thy way* before *thee*."

The words are different in Malachi iii. 1, "Behold I will send a messenger, and he shall prepare the way before *me*," i. e. the Lord of Hosts. See remark on Mark i. 2. Both Mark and Luke seem to have considered the alteration of a few pronouns perfectly admissible, in order to accommodate the passage to Jesus.\*

Luke xxiv. 27: "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Luke xxiv. 44: "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day."

Deut. xviii. 15: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto

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\* Lightfoot in Marc. i. 2, says, "Ista quæ a Malachiâ citantur, non ex-acte congrua vel fonti Hebræo, vel versioni Græcæ."

The Septuagint has "he shall prepare the way before *my face*."

thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken."

This might apply to any one who claimed the office of prophet after the time of Moses. The description suits Samuel rather than Jesus ; for the people are commanded to hearken to this prophet, instead of hearkening to diviners with familiar spirits and wizards.

From 1 Sam. xxviii. 3—9, it appears that Saul, acting probably under the direction of Samuel, had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land, substituting for this heathenish mode of divination inquiries of the Lord by dreams, by Urim, and by *prophets*.

It is generally allowed that there are many indications that the Pentateuch was first compiled by Samuel. It seems, then, in the highest degree probable that the above passage of Deuteronomy was the decree drawn up and published by Samuel for the expulsion of the wizards, and the appointment of regular prophets like Moses, who were to form the legal and authorized medium of communication with the Lord, thus leaving no excuse for the irregular practices referred to. By the Prophet, therefore, Samuel meant himself and his successors ; the name Prophet being henceforward the proper designation, instead of the old title Seer. 1 Sam. ix. 9.

The parts of the Psalms and Prophets intended by Luke are probably those cited elsewhere. There is no passage in the Old Testament which seems at all to point out the Messiah's resurrection on the third day.\* Luke had in view,

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\* The Jews never expected that the Messiah was to rise from the dead, but that his posterity would reign after his death. "Messiam ex morte in vitam reditum esse Judæi nunquam expectarunt. 'Moriatur autem Messias, regnabuntque post ipsum filius et nepotes. Moritum enim ipse indicat Deus (vaticinio Esaïæ xlii. 4). Non caligabit, nec frangetur, donec ponat in terrâ judicium,' &c., inquit Maimonides in Diss. Commentario in Talmudis Tractat."—*Rosenmüller Scholia in Esaïam*.

perhaps, the story of Jonah, which Matthew had already cited as the type of that event; and possibly the following in Hosea vi. 1, 2: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

John i. 45: "Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

See the preceding remark.

John vii. 41: "Some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

The person from Bethlehem was to be a deliverer from the Assyrian (see note on Matt. ii. 6). John does not record the answer to the objection concerning the birth-place of Jesus, which Matthew and Luke had supplied, viz. that Jesus *was born* at Bethlehem; nor does he ever allude to this, but calls him Jesus of Nazareth. Yet if he knew that Jesus was really born at Bethlehem, he could hardly have avoided mentioning it here.

John xii. 37: "But though he had done so many miracles, yet believed they not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

The first quotation is from Isaiah liii., which, it will be shown, applies to Jacob or Israel. The second is from Isaiah vi., which describes the obstinacy of the Jews previously to the captivity. The time referred to is clearly noted, viz. from the year of Uzziah's death "until the cities be wasted without inhabitant." By comparing v. 11—13 with 2 Chron. xxxvi.



20, 21, it appears that the Babylonish captivity was the desolation referred to. The Evangelist's assertion, then, that Isaiah was speaking of Christ, proves his unscrupulousness in the use of the prophets, and probably his imperfect acquaintance with Jewish history.

John xix. 24 : " They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it (the coat), but cast lots for it, whose it shall be ; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did."

John v. 28 : " After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth."

Psalms xxii. 16 : " For dogs have compassed me ; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me : they pierced my hands and my feet." . . . 18 : " They part my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture." lxix. 21 : " They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

These coincidences are remarkable ; and it is not surprising that to the disciples, searching the Scriptures expressly for prefigurations of Jesus, they should have appeared unquestionable prophecies. Yet, on a careful perusal of the whole two Psalms, it does not appear that the resemblances in question can be considered as more than mere coincidences. The two Psalms contain the complaints of a man under persecution. Some parts apply very well to Jeremiah :

Compare Psalm xxii. 6, 7, with Jeremiah xx. 7.

lxix. 8,                      id.      xii. 6.

id. 14,                      id.      xxxviii. 6—9.

The whole of the 69th Psalm is so much in the style of Jeremiah, and so applicable to his long imprisonment (Jer. xxxvii. 16), that it seems not improbable that it was a part of his writings, of which it has been seen that detached parts are

dispersed under other titles in the Old Testament. Verses here and there apply very well to Jesus; others do not: for instance, lxix. 5, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee." 11, "I made sackcloth also my garment."

There are various readings of the text, "they pierced my hands and my feet." Rosenmüller gives a minute account of them, and concludes that the genuine reading was probably "they *bound* my hands and my feet," the Hebrew verb being one which might easily have been corrupted into the other readings.\* Grotius admits this reading to be a probable one.† The Septuagint has, "they pierced;" but there were copies in Aquila's time which had a different word. Since none of the Evangelists have made use of this text as a prophecy, whilst, as it stands at present, the coincidence is more striking than in many others which they have cited, it seems likely, that, in their time, the copies generally known to the Jews, whether of the Septuagint or of the Hebrew, had not the present reading, "they pierced."

That a man's enemies should plunder him even of his clothes, and cast lots for them, was not an unlikely thought to occur to a writer endeavouring to paint a scene of great distress; and the thing itself was very likely to be done by

\* Mihi vero, omnibus diligenter ponderatis, verisimile est, genuinam fuisse כרר a verbo כר colligere. Certe ex hac lectione varietates reliquæ omnes facillime derivari possunt.—Rosenm. Scholia in Ps. xxii.

† Hic quoque duplex fuit antiquitûs lectio, quam utramque Chaldæus in versione suâ conjunxit. Jacob ben Chaiim ait fuisse בארר, foderunt, per ενερωθειν (insertionem) literæ Σ: idem testatur Moses Hadarsan: in quibusdam exemplaribus sic fuisse agnoscunt Masoretæ. LXX. ωρυξαν foderunt; quomodo ex eis citat Justinus et alii; Aquila, ησχυραν pudefecerunt. Nulla ergo hic fraus Christianorum; inter quos est et interpret Æthiops. Video quidem et Masoreticam lectionem posse defendi; sed altera loco magis convenit, tum ob alia, tum quia *leonis* comparatio non multo antè posita est, v. 13.—Grotius Annot.

the executioners of public criminals. Such a coincidence, therefore, by no means requires the supposition of a prophetic spirit in the author of the Psalm. The writer of the fourth Gospel evidently labours to relate the circumstances so as to be in perfect accordance with the quotation.

With respect to the offering of drink, there is much dissimilarity between the case contemplated by the Psalmist and that of Jesus. The Psalmist's enemies offer him vinegar (Sept. *οξος*, translated by Rosenmüller, "omphacium," or the juice of unripe grapes), and gall, *χολη* (according to Michaelis, *lolium temulentum*—Oedman, *colocynth*), both obviously in mockery, since the Psalmist complains of it. But the offering to Jesus, on the contrary, was meant as a relief. Pliny speaks of wines flavoured with myrrh, as having been frequently used.\* The Jewish writers agree that their criminals were accustomed to receive wine mingled with frankincense,† of which myrrh was an ingredient. And Mark says, that, immediately before the crucifixion, they offered to Jesus wine mingled with myrrh. If the vinegar offered afterwards were something different, it seems still to have been only what the Roman soldiers were accustomed to drink themselves.‡ Matthew alone speaks of vinegar mingled with gall; but it has been seen that there is reason to suspect that he accommodated his description purposely to the Psalm.

John xix. 33—36: "They brake not his legs. . . . For these things

\* Hist. Nat. xiv. 15.

† Babyl. Sanhed., fol. 43, "Prodeunti ad supplicium capitis, potum dererunt, granumque thuris in poculo vini, ut turbaretur intellectus ejus."—See Rosenmüller in Matt. xxvii.

The incense described Exod. xxx. 34, contained stacte, which Pliny and Dioscorides spoke of as being fresh or liquid myrrh.

‡ Rosenm. in Matt. xxvii.

were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

Exodus xii. 46: "In one house shall it (the lamb) be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh abroad out of the house, neither shall ye break a bone thereof." Although Jesus might resemble the paschal lamb in this last respect, in many others there was no resemblance whatever, as in the eating of it, and the sprinkling of its blood on the door-posts. A spiritual resemblance, however, to this, and to the lambs used in the sacrifices, was supplied by the doctrines of transubstantiation and the atonement; and it is worthy of consideration whether the disposition of the disciples, to find types of Jesus in animals so commonly used in the Jewish sacred rites, did not lay the main foundation for these doctrines.

John xix. 37. "And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."

Zech. xii. 10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." The God of Israel promises a restoration of Jerusalem, and describes the bitter repentance which the Jews will then feel for piercing or blaspheming and injuriously treating himself. A word, signifying properly to pierce, is used in the sense of blaspheming, Levit. xxiv. 11. To express the first person by the third after the intervention of a relative is a common Hebraism.\*

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\* Prima persona, sequente maximè relativo, sæpissime per tertiam in his libris exprimitur. Quem confixerunt, **אֲשֶׁר דָּקְרוּ** εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν, ut habuere Græci interpretes quidam, et Johannes evangelista, ad Christum **μυστικῶς** hæc applicans. At LXX, commutatis literis perquam similibus,



To "mourn as for an only son," was only a proverbial phrase for excessive mourning. See Jer. vi. 26; Amos viii. 10.

It is worth while to notice here a curious text, which, although not quoted by the disciples as a prophecy, seems, as it stands in our translation, to present a remarkable coincidence; especially as it precedes Zech. xiii. 7, applied by the Evangelists to Jesus. Zech. xiii. 6: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." The explanation suggested by Grotius is as follows: The writer describes the time when the idols and false prophets shall be banished from the land, and the latter fallen into such disrepute, that those who had hitherto followed the profession would be ashamed of it; and when taxed with affecting to be prophets, as evidenced by their rough garments, would deny it with many excuses, such as, "I am no prophet, but an husbandman, for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth:" and when pressed further, "What then are these wounds or marks branded upon your hands?" (i. e. certain seals or impressions called by Prudentius, sphragitidæ, by which many idol-worshippers were accustomed to devote themselves to their gods, see Rev. xiii. 16, 17) he shall answer, "They are only those with which I was marked in the house of my friends," i. e. as a badge of servitude to the family whose cattle I was keeping.

John xx. 10: "For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise from the dead."

See remark on Acts ii. 25.

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legerunt רָקְדוּ *ανθ' ων εξωρχησαντο*, quia debacchati sunt aut absilierunt. Noster sensus optimus est, nam *configere* Deum dicuntur, qui eum probris lacesunt; nam sic et נָקַב quod propriè est *perforare* ponitur pro βλασφημειν. Levit. xxiv. 11.—Grotius Annot.

Acts i. 16 : " This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas. . . . 20 : For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein ; and his bishopric let another take."

The quotations are from the 69th and 109th Psalms, and have no more reference to Judas than to any other wicked person. The writer is denouncing his own adversaries. The first quotation is not correct, for the words in the Psalm are, " Let their habitation," &c.

Acts ii. 16 : " For this (the gift of tongues) is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams : and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy, and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath ; blood and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come ; and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The latter part of Joel promises, after the captivity, a miraculous interference of heaven in favour of Israel, and a day of vengeance on the nation's enemies. Peter imagined that this promise was about to be fulfilled in his days ; but the event proved that he was mistaken. The prophecy of visions and dreams fulfilled itself, for it occasioned the belief in the church that such gifts were really amongst them, and the belief produced instances. Nevertheless, the gift of languages, with a view to which Peter introduces the prophecy, is not mentioned in it.

Acts ii. 25 : " For David speaketh concerning him (Christ), I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad. Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption. . . . Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the

patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day : therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

The Psalm is one of thanksgiving, and there is no reason to suppose that David meant to speak of any one but himself. The latter part runs thus, Psalm xvi. 6 : " The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel ; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me ; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth : my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades, the grave) ; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

The writer of the Psalms appears to have believed in the immortality of the soul, and the possibility of its existence apart from the body. His meaning is clearly this : " The prospect of the grave even shall not prevent me from hoping in God all the days of my flesh ; for thou wilt not leave *my soul* in the grave, although my body may remain there ; neither wilt thou suffer thy saint (i. e. his soul) to see the corruption which his body will undergo ; but rescuing me, i. e. my then disembodied soul, from the gloomy hades, thou wilt shew to it some secret path to life." The same sentiment occurs Psalm xlix. 15, " But God shall redeem *my soul* from the power of the grave."

But Peter, or Luke, in order to accommodate the Psalm to Jesus, introduces a totally different sense, and concludes as if David had said that his body or *flesh* should not see

corruption, which David manifestly does not say. The substitution of the word "flesh" for "thine holy one" is too notable an alteration to be admitted without question; yet upon the equivalency of the two expressions is Peter's whole argument built.

Psalm cxxxii. 11: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne: if thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore." But Jesus did not appear again to sit on the throne of David, as Peter seems to have expected; therefore there is no ground for applying this to him.

Acts iii. 22: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

See remark on Luke xxiv. 27.

Acts iii. 24: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. 25: Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

Some passages in Isaiah and Micah seem to point to a religious conversion of all mankind; but the general subjects of all the prophets are the distresses of Israel, and his future glory.

Acts iv. 25: "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ (anointed). For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."

The 2nd Psalm appears to be a coronation ode, addressed to David, the Lord's anointed. A parallel passage is in Psalm lxxxix. 20: "I have found David my servant; with



my holy oil have I *anointed* him. . . . 27: Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth."

Acts viii. : The 53rd chapter of Isaiah applied to Christ by Philip.

This will be considered in a separate chapter.

Acts x. 43: "To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Nothing of this is to be found in any of the prophets.

Acts xiii. 27: "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."

The only passage which appears to countenance the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, is Dan. ix. 26: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off." This admits of various readings; and the time cannot be made to agree with the death of Jesus. See chap. on Daniel.

Acts xiii. 32: "The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee."

Since the Psalm contains no reference to Jesus (see note on Acts iv. 35), these words might be applied to any supposed instance of divine protection towards any person whatever, as well as to the resurrection of Christ.

Acts xiii. 34: "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Nathan the prophet promised David (2 Sam. vii. 15, 16), that the Lord's mercy should not depart from him as it did from Saul, and that his throne should be established for

ever. But being raised from the dead, and maintaining the throne of David, are very different things; and it is not surprising that the Jews of Pisidia contradicted the things spoken by Paul.

Acts xv. 15: "And to this (the conversion of the Gentiles) agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth these things."

Amos ix. 11, 12: "In that day" (on the return of Israel from among all nations) "will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, *that they may possess the remnant of Edom*, and of all the heathen which are called by my name (or upon whom my name is called), saith the Lord, that doeth this." In Obadiah, 17—20, is a similar passage, with a list of the territories which Israel is to possess, viz. Edom, the Philistines, the field of Ephraim, of Samaria, Gilead, &c. It is probable, therefore, that Amos alluded to an increase of the dominion of Israel. The apostle James (or Luke) has misquoted the prophecy, and made it to signify the conversion of the Gentiles to the religion of Jesus, to which meaning it could not have been strained, if he had quoted correctly.

Acts xvii. 2: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them (the Jews of Thessalonica), and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead."

Ver. 28: "For he (Apollos) mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

These passages show that the early Christians rested the proof of the Messiahship of Jesus mainly on the agreement of his character with the prophecies. We have seen that, in

many of those quoted, there appears to be no agreement, and that in some cases they altered the prophecies. There is reason, then, to suspect that when in these public discourses they were hard pushed by the Jews, they might be tempted to make out the correspondence the other way, by altering the facts.

Acts xxvi. 22: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day . . . saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

Acts xxvi. 27: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?"

Paul again chooses to rest the truth of his preaching on prophecy. If we suppose that Paul used here also such arguments as this, that the texts, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," and "I will give you the sure mercies of David," signified that Christ was raised from the dead, we cannot wonder that Festus should have thought that this kind of argument contained more learning than common sense.

Acts xxviii. 23: "And when they (the Jews of Rome) had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them, concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning until evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

From Paul's threat to turn to the Gentiles, it would seem that those who did not believe were the greater part. In an assembly of Jews, therefore, well disposed to examine the question fairly, his argument from prophecy failed.

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And we need not be surprised that Paul failed, after thus examining the manner in which he and the other apostles

were accustomed to argue from prophecy. We see that they selected sentences from all parts of the Old Testament, tearing them from the context, and applying them, without regard to their original meaning, to the history of Jesus. If the words bore a resemblance in sound only, they were pressed into the service, and sometimes altered so as to adapt them to their new application. By this method, a large collection of writings, like the Old Testament, might afford a tolerable description of any person whatever. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to suppose that, in this misinterpretation, the apostles pursued all along a system of intentional fraud. Very few of the Jews in their time attended so much to historical criticism as to be able to pronounce on the original meaning of all the prophetic parts of the Old Testament. Like many persons in our own time, they quoted them piecemeal, as if they were a collection of separate oracles. Jesus adapted some of his actions intentionally to the prophecies, and claimed to be the predicted Messiah: this put his followers upon seeking for more evidence of the same sort, and, thus biassed, they imagined that they discovered abundant coincidences. Afterwards, quoting from memory in their public discourses, they gave to the words the same turn which they had already given mentally to the sense; and, acquiring thus the habit of making out coincidences, they insensibly altered also their narratives of facts.\*

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\* Basnage (*Hist. of Jews*, ch. xxvi.) gives an account of the notions of the Talmudists and Rabbis concerning the Messiah expected by the Jews. They are extremely confused and contradictory. The Rabbis agree that the prophets contain oracles relating to the Messiah, but that the particular oracles which indicate his coming cannot be distinguished. Some say they were fulfilled in the person of Hezekiah. Maimonides gives for the true character of the Messiah, that he shall overcome all nations and never die. Some acknowledge that all the terms fixed for the coming of the Messiah are past. Hillel, who lived in the century before Jesus Christ, said, "There is no more a Messiah for Israel; for they had a fruition of him in the time



The hypothesis of a secondary or mystical sense in the writings of the Old Testament is totally unsupported. The writers themselves do not pretend to have more than one

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of Hezekiah." Nevertheless, the Jews generally expect confidently that he will still come, saying, that God hath put off the time of his coming on account of the sins of the people, and that he will appear when they repent. Some Rabbis maintain that there will be two Messiahs; the first, the son of Joseph, called Nehemiah, with the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, will war successfully against the Romans, and recover the vessels of the sanctuary hid in the palace of the emperor Julian; but he himself will be killed by the giant Armillus, a pseudo-Messiah or Antichrist. Afterwards shall appear the second Messiah, the son of David, accompanied by Elijah; he is to kill Armillus, restore Jerusalem, destroy all the enemies of Judah, and raise the dead. At his banquet, the Leviathan will form the first course, God having killed and salted him for that purpose: the Behemoth will be served up for meat; and the fowl will consist of the bird Bariuchne, whose wings, when opened, cover the sun, and one of whose eggs having fallen, drowned sixty cities. This fable gave rise to a formulary of oath common among the Jews, "If I lie, let me never eat of the wild ox, i. e. the behemoth."

The following passage from Maimonides "*de Regibus et Messiâ*," not contained in all the editions, and alleged by Schoettgen to be erased by the Jews themselves, but quoted by Wagenseil on the Tract Sota, p. 346, is interesting, as showing partly the thoughts of an eminent Jew on Jesus and the hopes of his nation:—

"Also concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who believed himself to be the Messiah, and was slain by the Sanhedrim, Daniel hath thus prophesied, '*Et filii effractorum populi tui efferent se ad stabiliendam visionem et cadent*,' (in our version "and the robbers, or children of the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision, but shall fall,") Dan. xi. 14. For what stumbling-block is greater than this, that all the prophets said that Messiah was to deliver, preserve, and gather the Israelites, and to adopt their laws? But he occasioned Israel to perish by the sword, and his remnants to be dispersed and oppressed, and the law to be changed, and many to be perverted, and another besides Jehovah to be worshipped. But to attain to the thoughts of the Creator is not in the strength of man. For our ways are not his ways, nor our thoughts his thoughts. All these things of Jesus, the Nazarenes, and of the Ishmaelites who rose up after him (the Mahometans), are only to prepare the way for King Messiah, and to prepare the whole world to serve Jehovah in unity, as is said Zeph. iii. 9, 'Then will I turn to all people a pure language, that all may call upon the Lord, to serve him with one consent (shoulder).' How? The world hath long been filled with words of the Messiah, of the law, and of the commandments, (i. e. probably with the fame of them,) and these things are diffused in many islands and

meaning, which in most cases is a very intelligible one, relating to events near their own times. A very striking and continuous correspondence with the history of Jesus might seem to justify such an hypothesis; but it has been shown that there is no such correspondence, the coincidences being only few and imperfect.

Let us now examine more at length the prophecies most relied on by Christians, viz. the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and the book of Daniel.

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many nations, circumcised in heart and flesh, and hence they object and answer concerning those things, even the mysteries of the law, and say, 'These commandments are the truth; but now for a long time they have ceased, nor are to be used any more.' Moreover they say, 'In these things were mysteries not expounded; but King Messiah hath come, and revealed their secrets.' But when King Messiah shall indeed come, he will prosper and be exalted, and they will all return, and know that these were falsehoods."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ON THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

THE Jewish sacred writings were burnt or dispersed at the time of the captivity, and afterwards collected together again, as is generally agreed, by Ezra.\* In the second book of Maccabees we read that "Nehemiah founded a library, and gathered together the acts of the kings and the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings, concerning the holy gifts," (about 445 B. C.,) 2 Macc. ii. 13. This collection was doubtless that made by Ezra the priest, who was more qualified for such a task than the viceroy himself, and it appears to have been the first regular compilation of the Prophets and Psalms. But since Nehemiah or Ezra had to deal with a miscellaneous collection, written at different times within the six centuries before their time, it is probable that there were some pieces of which they could not ascertain the exact date or authorship, and which consequently they might have placed under a wrong name. Between the time of Ezra and that of the Septuagint translation, (B. C. 277,) it is allowed that the Jews were careless about the custody and transcription of their sacred books.† Josephus, in his account of the Septuagint, makes Ptolemy's librarian say to

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\* The Christian fathers generally believed that Ezra was divinely inspired to republish the lost and corrupted writings. Iren. contra Hær., l. iii. xxi. 2. "The Scriptures having been corrupted during the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews having returned after seventy years into their country, afterwards, in the time of Artaxerxes, God inspired Ezra to remember all the discourses of the former prophets, and to restore to the people the law of Moses."

† Immo et Buxtorfius hoc est confessus, Judæos a tempore Esdræ negligentiores fuisse circa textum Hebræum, et non curiosos circa lectionem veram.—Kennicott, Diss. Gen., sect. 19.

the king, "And I let you know that we want the books of the Hebrew legislation, with some others; for they are written in the Hebrew characters, and are to us unknown. It hath also happened to them that they have been transcribed more carelessly than they should have been, because they have not had hitherto royal care taken about them." Ant. xii. ii. 4. This applied to the law; but the prophets were quite as likely to be transcribed carelessly. Moreover, the sacred books were again dispersed under Antiochus Epiphanes, and re-arranged by Judas Maccabæus (about 165 B. C.).

It is not surprising, then, that the prophetic writings have come down to us in a disorderly state, and that parts of one author's writings are found mixed with those of another.

The book of Isaiah appears to be a mixture of this kind. The first thirty-nine chapters contain much that was probably written by Isaiah himself, viz. the threatenings against Babylon, Moab, Tyre, &c., and the fragments of the history of Ahaz and Hezekiah, which must be parts of some larger and connected work of Isaiah; for it is said, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write:" yet there is none of the history of Uzziah in the present book of Isaiah. The thirty-ninth chapter ends abruptly in the midst of the history of Hezekiah, and the fortieth begins abruptly with the words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God."

The rest of the book, from these words, appears to be one connected exhortation to the Jews on their return from captivity under Zerubbabel, B. C. 536. It seems to be the work of some patriotic Israelite about that time, in order to inspire the people with zeal and courage to restore their nationality,



according to the permission of Cyrus. For if we compare the account of this memorable event in Ezra with these last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, we find the latter expressing exactly the feelings natural to a Jew on such an occasion. They speak throughout of the long sufferings undergone by Israel in punishment of the nation's sins, and of the glorious prospect opening upon them; of the assistance rendered by the Gentiles in restoring them to their country, which agrees with the decree of Cyrus, Ezra i. 4—6; of the fall of their old enemy Babylon; and Cyrus himself is twice mentioned by name, xlv. 28; xlv. 1. There are many comparisons between the God of Israel and idols, and intimations that the true God was becoming known to the Gentiles by means of his servant Jacob; which agrees with the desire of the neighbouring nations to join with the Jews in rebuilding the temple, Ezra iv. 2. It may be answered, that all this might have been written by Isaiah in the spirit of prophecy, two hundred years previously; but of this there is no proof beyond the fact that it has been found since the time of Maccabæus in the miscellaneous collection called Isaiah; therefore it is more probable that these chapters were written by some one contemporary with the events and persons which he describes.

The prevailing idea is that Jacob or Israel, the personification of the Jewish nation, is the chosen servant of God; that throughout all his vicissitudes he is specially protected by Him; and that his late sufferings were owing to the nation's sins. I will extract some passages which have a bearing upon those usually interpreted of Christ.

Isaiah xli. 2: "Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow."

By comparing this with xlv. 1—3, Cyrus appears to be the person intended. Persia or Elam lay to the east of Babylon.

Ver. 8 : “ But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend. . . . 10 : Fear thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

Here there can be no doubt who the *servant* is, viz. the Jewish people, considered figuratively as one man, their ancestor Jacob.

Isaiah xlii. 1 : “ Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my spirit upon him ; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”

Matthew has applied this to Jesus, xii. 18. Grotius\* and Rosenmüller† think it should be understood of Isaiah himself. The similarity of the description, however, would lead one to suppose that the servant here is the same as the one in the preceding chapter, viz. Jacob. And the Septuagint surely settles the point, for it inserts the name, “ Jacob is my servant, I will uphold him ; Israel is my elect,” &c. The vanity of the Gentiles’ gods had just been described, and now Jacob is shown to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, by making known to them his God.

Ver. 2 : “ He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.”

The mute and humble condition of Jacob at Babylon, and under the Persians.

Ver. 3, 4 : “ A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax

\* Annot. in Esaïam.

† Scholia. Rosenmüller considers xl. 6, 27 ; xli. 1, 8, 25 ; xlii. 1, 14 ; xlviii. 16 ; li. 1 ; lxi. 1 ; to refer to the prophet himself. But he allows, in his note on xlix. 3, that he fluctuated long between that interpretation and the one which refers the passage to the whole Jewish people.

shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law."

Whilst other nations are famous for magnificence or martial glory, the oppressed Jacob is distinguished for his mildness, innocence, and possession of the truth concerning God, which he will spread to other nations.

Ver. 5—8 : " Thus saith God, the Lord. . . . I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles ; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord ; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

This agrees with the description of Jacob in the preceding chapter, xli. 10—17. The 15th verse had represented him as a "new sharp instrument," to execute some purpose of the Lord concerning the heathen. This chapter shows the purpose to be the extirpation of the idols, and the diffusion of the knowledge of the Lord.

Ver. 18 : " Hear, ye deaf ; and look, ye blind, that ye may see."

Ye blind idolaters, see the light of the true religion of Israel.

Ver. 19 : " Who is blind but my servant ? or deaf as my messenger that I sent ? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant ?"

Jacob himself is more blind than any of them, not to see the purpose of God concerning him through all his political vicissitudes, viz. that he is to be God's messenger to give light to the Gentiles.

Ver. 20 : " Seeing many things, but thou observest not ; opening the ears, but he heareth not."

Although he gives light to others, he remains blind him-

self, for the nation does not generally recognize the said evident purpose of God.

Ver. 21 : "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake ; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable."

Nevertheless, since Jacob has preserved his fidelity to God by maintaining his law delivered by Moses, the Lord will at last exalt him and the law amongst the nations.

Ver. 22 : "But this is a people robbed and spoiled ; they are all of them snared in holes, and hid in prison-houses : they are for a prey, and none delivereth ; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore."

The anticipated objection of an opponent. How can it be true that God intends such great things for his people, when we see them robbed ? &c.

Ver. 23, 24 : "Who among you will give ear to this ? Who will hearken and hear for the time to come ? Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers ? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned ? for they would not walk in his ways."

The writer's answer. The sufferings of Jacob in his seventy years' captivity are no disproof of God's special protection of him, but the contrary, for they were inflicted to turn the people from their sins.

Isaiah xliii. 10 : "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen."

Isaiah xliv. 2 : "Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee, Fear not, Jacob my servant, and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen."

These, and many similar verses, show that the servant spoken of continues to be Jacob or Israel. They show also that the distinction between the people themselves and their emblematic representative Jacob is not always accurately preserved, but that the writer sometimes passes loosely from one to the other ; as is natural, from the difficulty of maintaining the figurative style through the whole of a long composition. A writer who should usually speak of the



English nation under the names of Albion or Britannia, would be very apt sometimes to drop into the plainer style of the people of England, or Englishmen ; and in a poetical composition he would be allowed to use the terms as synonymous, or to consider the individuals composing the nation as distinct from their collective representative, as suited his purpose.

Isaiah xlv. 1 : " Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him. . . . 3 : I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know, that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. . . . 4 : For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name : I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. . . . 13 : I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways : he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of Hosts. . . . xlv. 9 : I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. . . . 11 : Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country ; yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass."

These passages show that the book was originally put forth under the character of a prophecy. The elevation of the sentiments throughout the book is not incompatible with this kind of pious fraud, if such a name be applicable in this case ; for prophecy was the favourite species of writing with the Jews, and their poets usually adopted it. Their God foresaw all things from the beginning. The description of events as contemplated by him in the future, presented a more vivid picture to the imagination than an historical narrative in the past tense. The writer believed that the Lord had decreed in his own councils the advent of Cyrus, and had even predetermined his name ; and the Lord is poetically represented as announcing his decrees.

Isaiah xlix. 1 : " Listen, O isles, unto me ; and hearken, ye people, from afar."

Here begins a triumphant song of Jacob on account of

the departure from Babylon, introduced by the preceding chapter.

Isaiah xlix. 3, 4: “ (The Lord) said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.”

I, Jacob, seem still to have laboured in vain in keeping God’s law, and to be without a reward; for, after all, I am poor, despised, subject to the Persians, and although restored to Palestine, yet only a small remnant compared with the numerous twelve tribes who formerly inhabited the land.

Isaiah xlix. 5: “ And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.”

The Lord that formed me, Jacob his servant, saith, in order to bring me again to him, after such a long apparent estrangement from his favour at Babylon, Though the tribes of Israel be not all gathered into their land, yet I, Jacob, shall still be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, for he hath a higher purpose concerning me than to make me politically a great nation.

Isaiah xlix. 6: “ And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved (or desolations) of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

To restore thy tribes and kingdom to their former greatness is but little, compared with the higher office to which thou, Jacob, art appointed, of giving light to the Gentiles.\*

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\* Grotius, Rosenmüller, and others, suppose that Isaiah in the beginning of this chapter speaks of himself. But this interpretation also would require a very forced construction of some parts, and particularly of verse 3. Whereas the other interpretation, viz. that Jacob and the Lord are the only

Isaiah xlix. 7: "Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation (Gentiles) abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee."

The despised Jacob shall at last receive homage from the princes of the earth, of which we see the beginning in the respect now paid to the Jewish nation by Cyrus. The despised one evidently means the Jewish nation, because nearly the same things are said of it ver. 21—23, under the name of Zion.

Isaiah. l. 4: "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned."

Grotius again supposes this and the following verses to refer to Isaiah, and Jerome says that the Jews understood them in this way. But on comparing ver. 7 with xli. 10—14, it seems more natural to consider Jacob the speaker.

Isaiah lii. 11, 12: "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence; touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go with haste, nor go by flight."

A parallel passage to chap. xlviii. 20, "Go ye forth of Babylon." Cyrus permitted the Jews to carry back the sacred vessels; and the return was conducted by Zerubbabel with great order, each family being numbered. Ezra i. ii.

Isaiah lii. 13: "Behold my servant shall deal prudently (or, prosper); he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

A parallel passage to xlviii. 15, where, after speaking of the fall of Babylon, it is said, "He (Jacob) shall make his way prosperous."

There is no reason to suppose that another subject, such as

speakers, agrees well with the whole strain of the book, whilst the difficulty seems to be owing merely to the loose manner of using the pronouns in Hebrew, the first and third persons being frequently interchanged, of which there are many instances even in Josephus. See also Acts xvii. 2, 3. Grotius concludes that the reading in the text of ver. 5 is the true one, and not the marginal reading.

the mission of Christ, is introduced here. Supposing the "servant" to mean, as usual, Jacob or Israel, the connexion with what goes before is easy and natural. Jacob, by the return from captivity, shall prosper, &c.

Isaiah lii. 14: "As many were astonished at thee (Lowth, him): his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

The disgraced state of Jacob at Babylon.

Isaiah lii. 15: "So shall he sprinkle many nations, the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider."

Cyrus confesses that "the Lord God of Israel, he is the God," Ezra i. 3; other kings shall follow his example, and wonder to find that the small despised Jewish nation was God's instrument for so mighty a purpose. The following is a parallel passage addressed to Zion, xlix. 23: "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet."

Isaiah liii. 1: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

Who is not surprised at hearing this account of God's dealings with Jacob, and his intentions in laying afflictions upon him?

Isaiah liii. 2: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

At Babylon Jacob or Israel was like a plant growing on a harsh soil. The nation was in slavery, and had none of the beauty and splendour of an independent people. In chap. xlv. 3, Jacob is compared to the dry ground itself; which is nearly parallel to the root out of a dry ground in this place.



Isaiah liii. 3 : " He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; (or he hid, as it were, his face from us;) he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

In chap xlix. 7, Jacob or Israel is called " him whom man despiseth." The latter part seems to mean, because of the contempt into which the Jewish nation had fallen, we Jews even were become ashamed of it.

Isaiah liii. 4 : " Surely, he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

The sorrows of Jacob are our own, and ought to endear him the more to us Jews; yet many of us began to consider our nation forsaken by God, and were inclined to renounce our nationality.

Isaiah liii. 5 : " But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes (or bruise) we are healed. 6 : All we like sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

The right view of the nation's or Jacob's sufferings is, that they are to correct the iniquities of the people. Our country hath suffered much since the days of Nebuchadnezzar; but by this, we Jews are healed or made righteous. A parallel place is xliii. 24—28 : " Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities; . . . thy first father hath sinned, and teachers have transgressed against me. Therefore I have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches."

Isaiah liii. 7 : " He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : and he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Jacob hath patiently endured his hard tribulation at Babylon.

Isaiah liii. 8 : " He was taken from prison and from judgment, and (or, he was taken away by distress and judgment, but) who shall declare his ge-

neration? for he was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of my people was he stricken " (or, was the stroke upon them).

Jacob was taken away from his own land by a severe judgment,\* and who can help wondering at the strangeness of his life and fortunes? for he became then to all appearance dead, being blotted out from the nations, the divine justice requiring this penalty for the sins of the people.

Isaiah liii. 9 : " And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich † in his death (in Hebrew, deaths), because (or, although) he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

Babylon, that idolatrous and rich city, seemed to be his tomb, his kings and people being carried thither to die.‡

Isa. liii. 10 : " Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin (or, when his soul shall make an offering for sin), he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

Yet all this was done by the Lord his God, not with a view to destroy him, but to fulfil his own deep purposes ; for when the people have thoroughly repented of their sins, and gone through the penalty decreed, Jacob shall be restored as a nation ; a fresh race of Jews shall spring up, and become a firm and flourishing people.

\* According to Kimchi, " Oppressus est exactionibus pecuniarum."

† In the present Hebrew text, the word is in the singular, " cum divite ;" but in Justin's time it seems to have been plural, " cum divitibus." " Quater plurali numero vocem (divites) affert Justinus, atque in eâ, ac si sincera esset, acquiescit."—Kennicott, Dissert., sect. 70.

‡ The sense given by Rosenmüller is, " Quinetiam sepulchrum ei assignarunt cum scelestis ; tumulum sepulchralem juxta facinorosos," which may mean simply that at his death he was accounted and treated as one of the wicked. In this case the second clause, " with the rich," &c., would be only a poetical repetition of the first. The *rich* and the *wicked* seem to be considered as nearly synonymous. Job xxvii. 13—19. The resemblance of the two adjectives *resho* and *osheir* might have suggested the use of such a synonyme. Kimchi says that the plural, " deaths," is used, because the Jews suffered many different kinds of deaths from the Babylonians.—See Rosenm. Scholia.

Ver. 11: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities."\*

Ver. 12: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

By his preserving the knowledge of the law of God, Jacob shall justify his people, or wash away their guilt in the eyes of the Lord. In reward, he shall enjoy again temporal prosperity, as when the kings of Persia shall compel their tributaries, princes stronger than Jacob, to assist him. This shall compensate him for the political death which he hath endured, and reward the patience with which he has undergone the penalty of the nation's sins, and thereby, like Moses, performed the part of an intercessor with the Lord for the people.†

Isa. liv. 1: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear, break forth into singing, and cry aloud . . . for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. . . . 3: For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

The same subject is continued, but Jerusalem or Zion, a

\* Lam. v. 7: "Our fathers have sinned, and are not, and we have borne their iniquities."

† It is possible that the "transgressors" in this verse may mean the idolatrous nations amongst whom Jacob was captive, which would render this a parallel passage to Jer. xxix. 7: "And seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it." But it seems more consistent to consider the transgressors here the same as in ver. 8.

The Rabbi David Kimchi supposed that, at ver. 1, the idolatrous kings and nations mentioned in the preceding chapter begin to speak, and that this whole chapter expresses their wonder at finding the Jewish nation destined to expiate their iniquities and to convert them. But it seems more consistent with the rest of the book to suppose that the iniquities of the Jewish people themselves are here intended; since Jacob or Zion is so frequently said to bear the iniquities of the people.—xlii. 24; l. 1; xliii. 27.

female, is introduced instead of Jacob. The same transition occurs in ch. xlix. The idea here is the same as in ch. liii. 10, "he shall see his seed;" and as the Jewish nation is plainly intended in this place, it is reasonable to suppose that it is in the former also.

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Thus is this celebrated fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which has been considered the chief prophecy concerning Jesus Christ, explained without any reference to him; and it is for the reader to determine if the sense here given to the chapter does not upon the whole agree well with the context both before and after it, and with the style and ideas of the whole book, in numerous parts of which the figurative is strained nearly as much as is required by this interpretation. Whereas, if the passage be considered to relate to Christ, it is torn from the context, and the writer is made to introduce a new subject without giving any notice, and to return as abruptly to his usual one. Bishop Lowth warns us, at ch. xlii., that the writer is now about to speak of the Messiah;\* but the writer is surely little obliged to the Bishop for making him incoherent without necessity. The Bishop informs us also that the Messiah is often spoken of in this book under the name of Jacob or Israel;† but that these names mean here something quite different from what they usually do in the Old Testament, viz. the Jewish nation, is an unnatural and unsupported hypothesis. It is true that some of the Rabbis interpreted this chapter as relating to the Messiah,‡ in the same manner

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\* Lowth on Isaiah, notes on ch. xlii.

† Ibid. notes on ch. lii.

‡ Aben Esra. Sunt haud pauci magistrorum nostrorum qui hoc segmentum de Messiâ interpretentur, propterea quidem quod majores nostri beatæ memoriæ, dicant Messiam natum esse, quo tempore destructa est domus sanctuarii, sed dein catenis vinctum. Rosenm. Scholia in Es.



as they did many other parts of Scripture having obviously no such sense; for which practice they are blamed as fanciful and extravagant by the best modern critics.\* But some of the most learned and judicious among them, including Kimchi and Aben Esra, and the generality of the Jews, understood the chapter to relate only to their own nation.† Origen tells us, that when he argued with some Jews in favour of Jesus, from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, one of them replied “that the words did not mean one man, but one people, the Jews, who were smitten of God, and dispersed among the Gentiles for their conversion.”‡ He admits, also, that the Jews of his time were accustomed to deride the Christians, as not understanding the sense of the Scriptures on which they pretended to build so much. §

Some parts of the chapter cannot apply to Jesus, for he did not see his seed, nor prolong his days. The passages, “he bare the sin of many,” and “the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all,” require, for their application to Jesus, the doctrine of the atonement. The supposed types of the paschal and sacrificial lambs having laid the foundation for that doctrine,|| it may easily be imagined, that the desire to

\* Sed constat evangeliorum scriptores ex singulari quâdam scripta sacra interpretandi ratione, quæ tunc inter Judæos recepta esset, multa prophetarum aliorumque scriptorum Hebræorum loca de Messîâ interpretatos esse, quæ a scriptorum consilio de aliis personis agerent. Rosenm. addit. in cap. xlii.

† Ibid. in Es. liii.

‡ Cont. Cels. i. 55.

§ Kennicott, Diss. Gen. 80.

|| The paschal lamb was killed merely for a commemorative feast, and not properly sacrificed; but in many of the sacrifices, and, amongst others, those of sin-offerings, lambs were used. Lev. v. 6. In the New Testament Christ is likened to both. 1 Cor. v. 7: “For even Christ our passover is slain for us.” 1 Pet. i. 18, 19: “Being redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” John i. 29: “Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.”

find in every verse of this chapter an application to Christ contributed to strengthen it.

The book of Isaiah was a favourite one among the Jews, from the beauty of its imagery and the grandeur of its views concerning their nation, which it represents as destined to a splendid revival, and to be the instrument for spreading the knowledge of God through many nations. Such views were not unnatural to an imaginative and patriotic Jew in the days of Cyrus, when the Jews had been brought freely into contact with other nations, and when the view of the established idolatries around them had contributed to exalt their reverence for their own ancient creed. In the natural order of things, some prophecies have a tendency to fulfil themselves; the spirit and aim of favourite writings impress themselves upon the readers; and thus the sublime and enthusiastic tone of this book of Isaiah was caught up by Jesus, and contributed to suggest to him the ideas of his Messiahship and of the kingdom of heaven. The book contains a mixture of temporal and spiritual views; the Jews are to become a great nation, and to spread God's word among the Gentiles. Jesus, accordingly, claimed the joint character of king and prophet. The Christ was to be both king of Israel, and a light of the world. It was only when he had been put to death, and some time had elapsed without his re-appearing in his kingly character, that his disciples began to represent him chiefly as a spiritual prince. They, too, drew largely from the book of Isaiah, and rested upon it their main arguments from prophecy. So prominent a place, indeed, do the language and spirit of this book seem to have held in the minds of both Jesus and his disciples, that it might be considered as not the least among the causes of the establishment of Christianity. But when the divine authority of Jesus had come to be acknowledged as independent and incontestable,

the matter was reversed, and Christianity was held to be the cause of the book. Instead of admitting the natural order of things—that Jesus had imbibed the views of a book which he had read—it was supposed that the author of the book had, by means of a divine spirit of foresight, anticipated the views of Jesus.

Paley\* cites the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah as “the clearest and strongest” prophecy of the Old Testament; and argues on the improbability that the personage alluded to could mean a nation. But he omits to inform his readers that the Jewish nation had been repeatedly introduced as one man, Jacob; and, indeed, makes no comparison of the chapter with the context; so that his arguments must necessarily mislead a reader who has not previously studied the whole book of Isaiah.

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\* Evid. Part II. ch. i.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ON THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL.

Vision of  
the ram  
and goat. IN the eighth chapter of Daniel there is an account of a vision of a ram with two horns, which was smitten by a he-goat, having a notable horn between his eyes, which horn being broken, four other notable horns came up, toward the four winds of heaven. The chapter itself informs us that by this was meant, the conquest of the kings or kingdoms of Media and Persia by the king of Grecia; the first great horn being the first king, viz. Alexander the Great, and the four notable horns after him four kingdoms which "shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power;" i.e. plainly the four Macedonian monarchies of Thrace, Macedon, Syria, and Egypt.

The little  
horn. So far the vision is clear, and commentators agree. But Daniel sees coming out of the four notable horns, a little horn, which plays a very conspicuous part; and to determine who the little horn is, forms the great problem of the book of Daniel. Josephus understood it to mean Antiochus Epiphanes; according to Jerome, it was Antiochus as a type of Anti-christ; Sir Isaac Newton thought that it meant the Romans; Bishop Newton, that it meant, first the Romans, and afterwards the popes.

The matter is so far important, that on the meaning of the little horn depends mainly the prophetic character of the book of Daniel; i.e. whether it really contains the description of any events which happened after the time when it was written; and also whether the writers of the New Testament



have made Jesus Christ apply correctly several passages from Daniel.

A close examination of all the passages relating to the little horn, will prove that its meaning ought to be limited to Antiochus Epiphanes. Compare them with the two books of Maccabees, which describe minutely the events of that time, and which, being written also by Jews, render the parallelisms more clear than any other history.

Dan. viii. 9: "And out of one of them (the four notable horns) came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land."

1 Maccabees i. 10: "And there came out of them (the servants of Alexander) "a wicked root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage at Rome; and he reigned in the 137th year of the kingdom of the Greeks." Then follows an account of his conquests in Egypt, and his oppression of Judæa.

Ver. 10: "And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11: Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. 12: And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised and prospered."

1 Macc. i. 20: "And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the 143rd year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the shewbread, &c. . . . He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels; also he took the hidden treasures which he found. And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly. Therefore there

was great mourning in Israel. . . . 39: The sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness; her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach. . . . 41: Moreover, king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed, according to the commandment of the king. Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols."

The vision of the little horn is interpreted thus by the angel:

Dan. viii. 23: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up."

In 2 Macc. iv. v. is related the wickedness of the high priests, Jason and Menelaus, and the prevalence of Greek or heathenish fashions at the beginning of the reign of Antiochus.

Ver. 24: "And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."

"Not by his own power;" i. e. he did all this by permission of God, in order to punish the transgressions of the Jews.

Ver. 25: "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

1 Macc. i. 29: "And after two years were fully expired, the king sent his chief collector of tribute unto the cities of Judah, who came into Jerusalem with a great multitude, and spake peaceable words unto them, but all was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon

the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel."

The end of Antiochus was, that he died of a sudden disease, as he was on his way to destroy Jerusalem.\*

Dan. viii. 13: "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14: And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Judas Maccabæus cleansed the sanctuary on the 25th day of the month Casleu, in the year 148 (1 Macc. iv. 52), which would allow at most only 2095 days from the entrance of Antiochus into the temple in the year 143. But the calculation is perhaps made to the death of Antiochus, in 149; for the word *cleansed* is translated in the margin "justified." This would give about 2300 days.

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The identity of the little horn with Antiochus is perceived still more plainly on reading the whole of the books of the Maccabees. The style of speaking, and the sentiments concerning him, are the same in the prophet and in the historians.† There is in both an expression of vivid indignation at his oppressions, and of trust in providence for a final restoration of the nation. Both bring before our eyes the dreadful distresses of Israel; the magnanimity and resolute faith with which he effected his own liberation. In the prophecy, the events are foretold as to occur near the time of the end; ver. 17—19, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time

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\* 2 Macc. ix. Polyb. in Excerpt. Vales, p. 145.

† This applies especially to the second book of Maccabees.

appointed the end shall be." The writer seems then to have been some one living about the time of the events he describes; for many are apt to imagine their own times the last days, or times of the end; but the expression would be absurd in the mouth of one who could see further into futurity. The days of Antiochus were not the last days of the Jewish people, nor, if the writer were really a prophet, is there any reason why he should have dwelt so largely and earnestly on his oppressions, rather than on subsequent calamities of the nation.

The things  
noted in the  
Scripture  
of truth.

The presumption that the writer was a Jew of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, or soon after, is confirmed by chapter xi. An angel shows to Daniel "what shall befall his people in the latter days," x. 14. He begins with Darius the Mede, alludes briefly to Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius Hystaspes, and Xerxes,\* the conquest of Persia by Alexander the Great, and the division of his kingdom; he becomes more minute in describing the quarrels and alliances of Syria and Egypt until the time of Antiochus Epiphanes; and relates his history in a warm and impassioned manner. This is exactly the manner of historians; they give a rapid sketch of events long past, and increasing details as they approach their own times. But no reason can be given why a prophesying angel in the time of Daniel should have adopted such a method. After the death of Antiochus, the prophecy, which had hitherto been minute and historical, becomes vague and mysterious, and soon closes. But Bishop Newton and others maintain that

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\* Since the prophecy is supposed to be given in the time of Daniel, it was necessary to glance at the intermediate history, in order to introduce the writer's principal topic, viz. a prophetic description of his own times. But as this is merely an introduction, he does it very briefly and carelessly, and passes at once from Xerxes to Alexander.



it goes beyond the times of Antiochus, and even their own. Let us, then, endeavour to clear up this point, which is so important towards fixing the character of the book.

Dan. xi. 20 : " Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom ; but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle."

Seleucus Philopator was obliged to pay a heavy tribute to the Romans, and attempted to plunder the sacred treasure at Jerusalem.\* He was poisoned by one of his officers.†

Ver. 21 : " And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom : but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

Antiochus Epiphanes, called in Maccabees a wicked root, obtained the kingdom by the help of Eumenes, king of Pergamus. He mixed much with the populace to obtain their favour,‡ and quitted his palace to make room for Tib. Gracchus, the Roman ambassador.

Ver. 22 : " And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken ; yea also the prince of the covenant."

A general allusion to the success of Antiochus in Egypt and Judea.

Ver. 23 : " And after the league made with him, he shall work deceitfully ; for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people."

Josephus says§ that " Antiochus circumvented Ptolemy by treachery, and seized upon Egypt ;" and that he got possession of Jerusalem without fighting. The prophecy seems to allude to a first expedition into Egypt, not clearly distinguished from the second in 1 Maccabees. See 2 Macc. v. 1.

Ver. 24 : " He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the

\* 2 Macc. iii.

† Appian in Syr.

‡ Athen. l. v.

§ Antiq. xii. 5, 2.

province, and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches; yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strongholds, even for a time."

Antiochus expended large sums in games.\* "He opened also his treasure, and gave his soldiers pay for a year. . . . Nevertheless, when he saw that the money of his treasure failed, and that the tributes in the country were small, because of the dissension and plague which he had brought upon the land in taking away the laws which had been of old time, he feared that he should not be able to bear the charges any longer, nor to have such gifts to give so liberally as he did before; for he had abounded above the kings that were before him." 1 Macc. iii. 28—30.

Dan. xi. 25: "And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army, and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall forecast devices against him."

1 Macc. i. 16: "Now when the kingdom was established before Antiochus, he thought to reign over Egypt. . . . Wherefore he entered Egypt with a great multitude . . . and made war against Ptolemy king of Egypt . . . but Ptolemy fled, and many were wounded to death. Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt, and he took the spoils thereof." According to 2 Macc. v. 1, this was his second expedition into Egypt.

Ver. 26: "Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain."

Many of the Egyptians were favourable to Antiochus, which enabled him to overrun the country with ease after the battle of Pelusium.†

Ver. 27: "And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and

\* Polyb. apud Athen. l. v.

† Diod. in Excerpt. Vales.

they shall speak lies at one table ; but it shall not prosper : for yet the end shall be at the time appointed."

Antiochus set Ptolemy Philometer at liberty, and pretended great friendship towards him.\*

Dan. xi. 28 : " Then shall he return into his own land with great riches, and his heart shall be against the holy covenant, and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land."

The capture of Jerusalem and the profanation of the temple are related, 2 Macc. v. 11, in such a manner that they might be supposed to happen immediately after the second expedition into Egypt ; but the authors of both books of Maccabees do not appear to have observed strict chronological order in the history of Antiochus. Their main object was to relate his oppressions of the Jews, and they give them in a mass, without stopping to notice each intervening expedition into Egypt. Hence, the history in Maccabees does not run chronologically parallel with the prophecy, which notices the different expeditions with more detail ; and it is possible that the above entrance into Jerusalem may be that alluded to at ver. 30, 31.

Ver. 29 : " At the time appointed, he shall return, and come toward the south, but it shall not be as the former or the latter. 30 : For the ships of Chittim shall come against him.

Antiochus was prevented from completing the subjugation of Egypt by the arrival of the Roman ambassadors.†

Ver. 30 : " Therefore he shall be grieved and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant. So shall he do, he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant."

2 Macc. v. 11 : " Whereupon removing out of Egypt in a furious mind, he took the city (Jerusalem) by force of arms."

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\* Diod. in Excerpt. Vales.

† Liv. l. 45.

Then follows the slaughter of eighty thousand Jews, and the profanation of the temple. Ver. 15 : " Yet was he not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world ; Menelaus, that traitor to the laws and to his own country, being his guide." The apostacy of many of the Jews is described also, 1 Macc. i. 15 : " They made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief."

Dan. xi. 31 : " And arms\* shall stand on his part, and shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

According to the Septuagint, "σπερματα ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀναστήσου-  
ται;" Jerome, "ex eo brachia stabunt." Arms, branches,  
or off-shoots, shall proceed from this wicked root, Anti-  
ochus; for his lieutenants, Philip, Andronicus, Menelaus,

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\* Here is the important point of separation with the commentators. Bishop Newton, (Diss. xxii. p. 2,) following Sir Isaac Newton, translates the first clause, " and after him, arms (that is, the Romans) shall stand up;" and informs us that, from this verse, " he" and " the king" mean the Romans. It is not easy to see any necessity for thrusting in the Romans here, since the explanation can go on much better without them; but if they cannot be introduced here, there is no chance of success afterwards; for the rest of the chapter does not afford even such a miserably narrow entrance as the word " arms;" and then the whole must evidently be limited to Antiochus, which would bring on the question whether Jesus Christ interpreted Daniel rightly in applying the abomination of desolation to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The Bishop, however, having with much effort, and calling on Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Mede to assist him, brought the Romans into the chapter, tries to keep them there with this remark : " Our Saviour himself making use of this same phrase, the abomination of desolation, in his prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, may convince us that this part of the prophecy refers to that event." But he candidly allows that what follows applies *in part* to the times of Antiochus. If we be obliged to conclude that this is the only rational application of what follows, the inference must be that the author of Matthew has misapplied this as well as many other parts of the Old Testament, and, in this instance, attributed his own mistake to Jesus Christ.



and Apollonius, will be as bad as himself. "And he left governors to vex the nations." 2 Macc. v. 22. The king's collector fortified himself in the city of David with a strong wall and towers, which became "a place to lie in wait against the sanctuary, and an evil adversary to Israel. Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it." 1 Macc. i. 36, 37. The abomination which maketh desolate is explained thus: "Not long after this, the king sent an old man of Antioch to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers, and not to live after the laws of God; and to pollute also the temple in Jerusalem, and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius." 2 Macc. vi. 1.

Dan. xi. 32: "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits."\*

Antiochus flattered as well as threatened in order to induce the Jews to change their religion, 2 Macc. vii. 24. Mattathias, however, killed the king's commissioner, who was compelling some Jews to sacrifice, 1 Macc. ii. 23: and flying with his sons into the mountains, set Antiochus at defiance.

Ver. 33: "And they that understand among the people, shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days."

1 Macc. ii. 27: "And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me. . . . 29: Then many that sought after justice and judgment, went down into the wilderness to dwell there. . . . 45: Then Mattathias and his friends went round about, and pulled down

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\* Interpreted by Bishop Newton concerning the persecution of the Christians by the Roman magistrates.

the altars." Meanwhile the oppressions were continued at Jerusalem and other cities. 2 Macc. vi. 8—12.

Dan. xi. 34: "Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help; but many shall cleave to them with flatteries."

The resistance of Mattathias, and afterwards of Judas, did not for a long time free the nation. It is very likely that some should have joined the company of Judas for the sake of betraying them: see one instance, 2 Macc. xiii. 21.

Ver. 35: "And some of them of understanding shall fall to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed."

Eleazar and other supporters of the law died soon after the outbreak of the insurrection.

Ver. 36: "And the king shall do according to his will: and he shall exalt himself,\* and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done."

1 Macc. i. 21: "He entered proudly into the sanctuary. 2 Macc. v. 16—20: "And taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated by other kings to the glory and honour of the place, he gave them away. And so haughty was Antiochus in mind, that he considered not that the Lord was angry for awhile for the sins of them that dwelt in the city . . . . And as the place was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty, so again the great Lord being reconciled, it was set up with all glory."

Ver. 37: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all."

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\* St. Paul appears to quote this passage when speaking of the man of sin: 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Bishop Newton explains it of the anti-christian power which began in the Roman emperors, and continued in the popes.—Diss. xvii. part 2.

The motive of Antiochus in this great persecution will not really be to spread the worship of his fathers, but to gratify his own vanity. Conceit will be the chief feature of his character. "And thus he that a little afore thought he might command the waves of the sea (so proud was he beyond the condition of man) and weigh the high mountains in a balance, was now cast on the ground."—2 Macc. ix. 8.

Ver. 38: "But in his estate shall he honour the god of forces: (Mahuzzim, or gods *protectors*:\*) and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."

Antiochus commanded the temple at Jerusalem to be called the temple of Jupiter Olympius,† and the one at Gerizim, the temple of Jupiter the *protector* of strangers, or Xenius.

Ver. 39: "Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."

1 Macc. ii. 15: "The king's officers, such as compelled the people to revolt, came into the city Modin, to make them sacrifice." iii. 45: "The sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the strong hold." iii. 32—36: "So he left Lysias . . . that he should place strangers in all their (the Jews') quarters, and divide their land by lot."

Ver. 40: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south

\* According to Bishop Newton, the saints and angels worshipped by the Greek and Latin churches.

† Baalsemen summus Phœnicum deus, quem Græci appellant Δία Ολυμπιον, quasi translato nomine. Id verum esse apparet ex Dii historiâ Phœni, ubi του Ολυμπιου Διος το ιερον Tyri dicitur. Item ex Philone Byblio in versione Sanchoniathonis, "hunc enim solum Deum existimabant cœli dominum, Beelsemen eum appellantes, qui est Phœnicibus Saturnus, Jupiter vero Græcis." Rectè Macedonibus ignotum, quia neque nomine isto Beelsemen, neque eo habitu et potestate quisquam erat in Græcis Deus.—Grot. Annot.

push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over. 41: He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42: He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43: But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps."

Here is a difficulty; because we have no account of any further expedition of Antiochus into Egypt. Porphyry, indeed, said that he invaded Egypt again in the last year of his reign, and is not contradicted by his opponent Jerome; but he is not supported by any histories extant of Antiochus. The description, however, agrees very well with the conquests in Egypt recorded in Maccabees. We must suppose, either that the writer of the prophecy has, by a slip of memory, misplaced these transactions in Egypt, which it was very easy to do even for one living near the times, since Antiochus made several expeditions into Egypt during his oppressions of the Jews; or, that the historians have not accurately distinguished the dates of the expeditions. It is clear that the author of the first book of Maccabees only intended to allude briefly, and once for all, to the conquests in Egypt; and the author of the second book seems hardly more careful on this point. The difficulty, however, does not seem to be sufficient to invalidate the supposition that the king of the north is still Antiochus.\*

Dan. xi. 44: "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away with many."

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\* According to Bishop Newton, the king of the north means the Turks, and the king of the south the Saracens.—Diss. xvii. part 2.



The Parthians in the east, and Armenia in the north, revolted; Antiochus proceeded with a large army to subdue them.\*

Ver. 45: "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces (aphedno) between the seas in the glorious holy mountain: yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

According to Theodotion, "He shall fix his tent in Aphe-dano, between the seas:" which agrees with the versions of Porphyry, Jerome, Houbigant, &c. The 2nd book of Maccabees says that Antiochus died of a disease in the mountains, when journeying from Ecbatana. According to Polybius, he was forced to put in at a town called Tabæ, lying in the mountains of Paratæcene, in the confines of Persia and Babylonia. Though several particulars remain thus unexplained, the verse applies in the main to Antiochus.

Dan. xii. 1: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

The protection of Michael, the tutelary angel of Israel, will be seen in the deliverance effected by Judas Maccabæus. But even after the death of Epiphanes, the Jews will be for several years miserably harrassed before their liberty be fully established. 2 Macc. x. 10: "Now will we declare the acts of Antiochus Eupator, who was the son of this wicked man (Epiphanes), gathering briefly the calamities of the wars." 1 Macc. ix. 27: "So was there great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen amongst them."

Dan. xii. 2: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth

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\* Prid. Connect., pt. ii. book 3.

shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 : And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

In all ages some men have been willing to believe the end of the world and the resurrection at hand. The writer of this prophecy ventures to predict that the deliverance of his nation will be followed by a resurrection of the dead. He thereby endeavours to console the friends of those Jews who had died faithful to the law, and to alarm the apostates. The resurrection of the dead is thus spoken of, 2 Macc. xii. 43—45 : "Judas sent to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection (for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead); and also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly. (It was an holy and good thought.)"

Ver. 4 : "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end : many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. 5 : Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 : And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 : And I heard the man which was clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand, and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half (or part); and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

Commentators agree that a time means a year, and therefore that a time, times, and a half, are three years and a half. Counting from the setting up of the idol altar, 25th Casleu, 145, to the cleansing of the sanctuary, there were exactly three years. Antiochus died soon after; but we have not the exact date of his death. The additional half year

would therefore seem to be sufficient to reach to the end, which was supposed to be approaching.

Ver. 8: "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9: And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10: Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

2 Macc. vi. 12: "Now I beseech those that read this book, that they be not discouraged for these calamities; but that they judge these punishments not to be for destruction, but for a chastening of our nation."

Ver. 11: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

This is nearly a repetition of the seventh verse; for 1290 days are 3 years and 195 days.\* It seems likely that these 1290 days are calculated to the death of Antiochus, since the next verse mentions 45 additional days, which appear to be intended to reach to the "end of the wonders." The phrase time, times, and a half (or part), might very well be used to express 1335 days, or 3 years and 240 days.

Ver. 12: "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

Since we have not the exact dates, it is impossible to ascertain whether the writer alludes to a real occurrence. It might be one of the battles with the generals of Antiochus Eupator, or the treaty of peace concluded with the Jews

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\* The Jews used the lunar year of twelve lunar months, of twenty-nine days and a half each, and added the intercalary days every two or three years. But in reckoning *many years together*, they appear to have counted by solar years of 365 days each. See Sir I. Newton on the Prophecies; Michaelis on Seventy Weeks, pp. 199, 203. According to Africanus, the Jews added three intercalary months at the end of every eight years.—Hieron. in Dan. ix.

by Eupator, or some other event considered of great magnitude at the time, and soon afterwards forgotten. But the most obvious meaning is, that the 1335 days are to reach to the end of the wonders and the resurrection. As this, however, did not happen within that time, the writer, who has been very correct in his other predictions, is wrong here; and, therefore, he was some one writing within forty-five days from the death of Antiochus Epiphanes.

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And thus we have, upon the whole, a very intelligible and simple explanation of these parts of Daniel, without being obliged to suppose with Bishop Newton that days mean years; to metamorphose the king of the north successively into the Romans, the Pope, and the Turks; to run through the history of the world in search of events to fit the prophecy; and, at last, to give the matter up by confessing that much of it remains yet to be fulfilled.\* The bishop's task was a difficult one, because he considered that the prophecy must be explained so as to save the infallibility of the writers of the New Testament; whereas, if we disregard their version of it, and compare it carefully with the history of the times of Antiochus, the matter becomes tolerably easy. The abolition of the Jews' ancient worship, and its restoration by Judas Maccabæus, were among the most impressive and romantic events in history; and it is not surprising that at such a time men's imaginations should have been much ex-

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\* The one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days form one of the most difficult problems; because, even if we agree to call them years, there was no remarkable event 1335 years after the setting up of the abomination or idol altar by Antiochus, to match with ver. 12. The bishop, therefore, conjectures that this abomination means here not what it did before, but the imposture of Mahomet, which he began to forge in his cave, A.D. 606; thus the end of the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five years would fall in with A.D. 1941, and commentators would be relieved of this difficulty for several generations at least.—See Diss. xvii. p. 362.



cited, and that mystical and prophetical writings should have been published.\* Those events, however, gradually retreated out of sight, and the common people among the Jews, who read very little history, applied the writing as they pleased. Thus Matthew applied the “abomination of desolation” to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and the writer of the Revelations, following him, ventured a prophecy that “the holy city would be trodden under foot by the Gentiles forty and two months,” that is, three years and a half. Rev. xi. 2. But history proves him to be wrong in thus limiting the time, whether the days be considered as days or years; whereupon Bishop Newton conjectures, that the forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years, must be calculated from the beginning of the Reformation, and that the treading of the holy city under foot means the tyranny over the church of Christ by the church of Rome, that is, “Christians only in name, but Gentiles in worship and practice.” Diss. xxiv. ch. 11.

Let us now examine another celebrated part of Daniel, the vision of the four beasts in the seventh chapter, in which Sir Isaac Newton and other Christian commentators thought that they found a description of the Roman empire, of its division by the barbarous nations, of the pope, and of the kingdom of Christ. If it could be shown that the writing does clearly describe these things, we must admit it to be a real prophecy; but, in fact, it does not bear more than a casual and imperfect resemblance to them;† whilst,

The vision  
of the four  
beasts.

\* “The Jews, after their return from the captivity to the time of our Saviour, were much given to religious romances.”—Prideaux Connect. Part II. book i.

† The reader is referred to Sir Isaac Newton on the Prophecies, and Bishop Newton’s XIVth Diss.

on the contrary, it applies very well to the events up to the time of Antiochus. The chief cause of the embarrassment of all the commentators appears to be their following Josephus in interpreting the fourth beast of the Roman empire. But Josephus himself might err in explaining an obscure writing at least two hundred years old, and the internal evidence must weigh more strongly with us than his opinion; especially as he does not seem, from his manner of writing, to have devoted much study to the question. See *Antiq.* x. xi. 7.\*

I venture to give a new explanation of it, viz. that the second beast means the kingdom of *Media*, the third *Persia*, and the fourth *Macedonia*. The difficulties which encumber Grotius's explanation of the fourth beast will then vanish, and nearly the whole chapter become clear, and in agreement with the following part of the book.†

Dan. vii. 3: "And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4: And the first was like a lion, and had eagles' wings; and I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."

All agree that this is Babylon, being parallel to the golden head of the image, ch. ii.

Ver. 5: "And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."

The kingdom of *Media*, and not that of the Medes and

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\* The concluding remark of Josephus betrays a mixture of carelessness with its candour, which could hardly proceed from an earnest critic: "Now, as to myself, I have so described these matters as I have found them and read them; but if any one is inclined to another opinion about them, let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me."

† Since the first edition of this volume was written, I have learned that the above interpretation has been given in several German works.

Persians united, as is commonly interpreted. This agrees with the corresponding place in the vision of the image, where the second kingdom is said to be inferior to the first, iii. 39, which was true of Media, but not of Persia, which surpassed Babylon in extent and power. The kingdom of Media, from its short duration, and from its being eclipsed by Persia, was lost sight of in later times ; but older authors show that it was looked upon as a distinct and powerful kingdom before the Persians came into notice. The Jewish prophets generally speak of Babylon as conquered by Media. Jer. li. 2 : " The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes ; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it." Ver. 28 : " Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes." Jer. l. 41, 42 : " Behold a people shall come from the north," (this must be Media, and not Persia or Elam, which was *east* of Babylon,) " and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. They shall hold the bow and the lance : they are cruel, and will not shew mercy . . . against thee, O Babylon." Isaiah xiii. 17, 18 : " Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb ; their eye shall not spare children." This agrees with the directions given to the bear—" Arise, devour much flesh." The Medes revolted from the Assyrians under Arbaces, and formed, by their side, an increasing empire. Under Phraortes and Cyaxares, they conquered Persia proper, the Assyrian kingdom of Nineveh, and all Asia to the east of the Halys. (Herodotus, sect. vii.) These are, perhaps, the three ribs in the beast's mouth. And, according to Daniel, v. 31, Darius the Median took the kingdom of Belshazzar, the remaining Assyrian kingdom of Babylon. Herodotus

plainly considered the Median and Persian empires as separate and distinct ; for he says, " Thus ended the reign of Astyages, and the Medes bowed beneath the Persians, after having ruled Asia beyond the river Halys one hundred and twenty-eight years . . . The Persians under Cyrus, by thus shaking off the yoke of Astyages and the Medes, became the masters from that time forward of Asia." (Sect. viii.) The two nations were, however, often spoken of together in later times, both from their resemblance, and because each, during its ascendancy, included the other.

Ver. 6 : " After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl ; the beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it."

The kingdom of *Persia*, and not that of Macedonia, as usually supposed. The four wings are perhaps the kingdoms of Media, Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were consolidated into the Persian empire. The four heads agree with the four kings of Persia, mentioned chap. xi. 2. But why did the writer notice only four of the Persian kings ? Since in the 11th chapter he plainly passes at once from Xerxes to Alexander the Great, one might suppose that he was imperfectly acquainted with the Persian history, or had forgotten it, which was very likely to be the case with a Jew about the year 164 B.C. ; for the Jews had not then begun generally to study the Greek literature, from which our Persian history is chiefly collected. Up to that time, the Jews had attended very little to the affairs of other nations, and only noticed them incidentally as connected with their own. A regular history of Persia being, therefore, wanting in the Jewish language, a Jew living two hundred years later than Alexander might easily commit even the gross mistake of placing him immediately after Xerxes.\*

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\* Since writing the above, I have found the following passage in



Ver. 7: "After this, I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and *strong* exceedingly; and it had *great* iron teeth; and it devoured and brake in pieces, and *stamped* the residue with the feet of it, and it was *diverse from all* the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns," explained thus ver. 23: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the *whole earth*, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." Ver. 7: "And it had ten horns," explained in ver. 24: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise."

The kingdom of *Macedonia*, or of the Greeks. Alexander is thus described, chap. xi. 3: "And a *mighty* king shall stand up, and shall rule with *great dominion*, and do accord-  
ing to his will." And thus, chap. viii. 7: "And there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down on the ground, and *stamped* upon him, and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand." And thus, 1 Macc. ii.: "He reigned the *first over Greece*, and made many wars, and won many strong holds, and slew the kings of the earth, and went through to the *ends of the earth*, and took spoils of many nations, insomuch that *the earth* was quiet before him."

1 Macc. i. 8, 9: "And his servants bare rule, every one in his place, and after his death they all put crowns upon themselves; so did their sons after them many years, and evils were multiplied in the earth."

Within a year after the death of Alexander, the following generals obtained shares of his dominions,—Lysimachus, Antipater, Craterus, Ptolemy, Antigonus, Cassander, Menander, Leonatus, Neoptolemus, Eumenes, Laomedon, Atropates, Perdiccas, and others of less note; but they were

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Michaelis, on the Seventy Weeks, p. 112: "The ignorance of the Jews concerning the Persian chronology was so great, that they only allowed fifty-four years and four kings to the whole Persian dynasty; nor did the inferior Rabbis only make this mistake, but even the most eminent." This remark appears to be made by Michaelis, without any reference to the chapter which is under consideration.

incessantly displacing each other, so that, at some period or other, the number of principalities may have been exactly *ten*, or the writer may have counted only the chief among them. But after a time, the whole were consolidated into *four* great monarchies; hence the writer might very naturally give to the beast ten horns here, and four in another place, chap. viii. 8; especially as he takes care to distinguish the latter as “notable horns.” But it is possible that he counted the successive rulers of Syria up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, viz. Laomedon, Ptolemy,\* Antigonus, Seleucus Nicator, Antiochus Soter, Antiochus Theos, Seleucus Callinicus, Seleucus Ceraunus, Antiochus the Great, and Seleucus Philopator.

“Ver. 8: “I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another *little horn*, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.” Explained ver. 24: “And another shall rise after them (the ten kings), and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.”

Here we have a proof that we have been following very nearly the right road, by arriving in sight of our old acquaintance, the little horn of chap. viii. and xi., which has been shown clearly to be Antiochus Epiphanes. The description of him here corresponds exactly with that in the above chapters, in many places even word for word. The three horns plucked up seem to correspond with “it waxed exceeding great toward the south, and the east, and the pleasant land,” viii. 9.

Ver. 25: “And he shall speak great words against the Most High,

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\* An objection of some weight is, that the first two were not crowned. But the opinion of the Jews appears to have been, that the servants of Alexander became kings *immediately* after his death, and even that he divided his kingdom amongst them whilst alive.—1 Macc. i. 6. And it is with the Jewish impression of history, rather than with true history, that we have to deal in this case.

and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

In chap. xi. 36, Antiochus is to "speak marvellous things against the God of gods." In 2 Macc. vi. 1, he endeavoured "to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers." And in Dan. xii. 7, his time was to be "a time, times, and a half." This is proof as clear as we could wish that the little horn is the same personage in all the three chapters, vii. viii. xi.

Ver. 9: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit." . . . 11: "I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

The writer here arrives at his own times, and therefore his prophecy no longer agrees with history. He begins to indulge his imagination, and, as in chap. xii., prophesies a general judgment as soon to come.

Ver. 12: "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."

The author could not tell how long the other kingdoms of Alexander's successors would remain after the death of Antiochus, and therefore speaks of their fate in a vague and mysterious manner.

Ver. 13: "I saw in the night visions; and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14: And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." Explained ver. 27: "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the *people of the saints of the Most High*, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

The Gentile nations had been represented by beasts and horns of beasts. The author compliments his own nation, the people of God, with a more dignified representative, viz. "one like the Son of man," and his patriotism gives them an universal dominion.

In verse 25, the saints of the Most High are clearly the Jewish people ; therefore the universal dominion is plainly prophesied of them as a nation, and not of any one individual. But it seems probable that many of the Jews in after-times, either by mistake or by way of accommodation, applied the term Son of man to the expected Messiah; and hence the adoption of that title by Jesus.\*

The vision  
of the  
image.

It would be tedious to examine the vision of the great image, ch. ii., in this minute manner. The sense is the same as that of the vision of the beasts. The head of gold is Babylon ; the breast and arms of silver, Media ; the belly and thighs (or sides) of brass, Persia ; the legs of iron, Macedonia ; the toes, part of iron and part of clay, Alexander's successors ; and the stone which filled the whole earth, the future kingdom of God's people, the Jews.

The different pretended prophecies in Daniel thus harmonize ; and all establish the same conclusions, viz. that the author wrote about the time of the death of Antiochus ; that his prophecies up to that time are history, and afterwards visionary speculations.

That the Jewish priests and leaders should have invented prophecies and visions to encourage the nation during the difficult times of the Maccabees, is probable enough in itself. We have, however, one instance given historically, 2 Macc. xv. Judas, to encourage his men before the battle of Capharsalama, told them a dream, "worthy to be believed, as if it had been so indeed," says the writer ; and the dream was, that the high priest Onias, and the prophet Jeremiah, had appeared to him, and that the latter had given him a holy sword. "Thus being well comforted with the words of

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\* Rabbi Saadiah, A.D. 927, said, in commenting on this place, "Like the Son of man : this is Messiah our righteousness."—See Lightfoot on Acts vii. 56. From John xii. 34, it would not appear that the Jews generally applied the term thus about the time of Christ. The use of the term in Ezekiel shows that originally it had no peculiar relation to the Messiah.



Judas, which were very good and able to stir them up to valour, and to encourage the hearts of the young men, they determined courageously to set upon them," &c. If Judas could invent a vision concerning Onias and Jeremiah, he, or some one else in his time, could as easily invent prophecies and visions of Daniel.

There remains to be considered the prophecy of <sup>The seventy weeks.</sup> the seventy weeks, Dan. ix., which has been called by Sir I. Newton the foundation of Christianity. Daniel is represented as praying in the first year of Darius the Mede, which was the last of the captivity, B.C. 538. Gabriel tells him, ver. 24, that

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

And he goes on to divide these seventy weeks as follows :

Ver. 25 : "From the commandment to build again Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince (Sept. unto the anointed ruler) shall be seven weeks. . . . . 7

"And threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." . . . . . 62

Ver. 26 : "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself (or Messiah shall cut them off,\* and they shall be no more his people) : and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Ver. 27 : "And he shall confirm the covenant (or a covenant) with many for one week ; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, (or, upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator,) even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." . . . . . 1

\* Exscindetur vel exscindet Messias, the passive and active future in Hebrew being the same.—Mich. on Seventy Weeks, p. 137.

It is generally supposed that a week means a week of years, or seven years; for the Jews counted their years as well as days by sevens, the seventh being the sabbatic year. Levit. xxvi. 8.—The latter part of the time evidently applies to Antiochus, in whose days many Israelites “made a covenant with the heathen,” by means of a licence obtained from the king, 1 Macc. i. 11—15. He occupied Jerusalem from the year 143 Seleucidæ, or of the kingdom of the Greeks, to 149 (B.C. 170—164), which might be about seven years, or a week of years; in the midst of which time, or towards the end of 145 (B.C. 168), the sanctuary was laid waste, “the abomination of desolation set upon the altar, and idol altars builded on every side,” ver. 54. Compare these two verses with ver. 30—35, Dan. xi., which have been shown to apply to Antiochus. It appears also, from ch. xii., that the writer expected a great deliverance and a resurrection to come soon after the death of Antiochus, which agrees with the bringing in of everlasting righteousness in ver. 24; consequently the death of Antiochus is about the date to which the seventy weeks extend. The decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple, which was considered to apply also to the city, (compare Ezra i. with 1 Esdras iv. 63,) was given B. C. 536, from which to the death of Antiochus we have 372 years. Since the writer calls this interval 70 weeks, or 490 years, we must conclude that he used a different chronology from ours.

What he meant by the Messiah or anointed prince is difficult to explain, since there was no person in Jewish history, from Cyrus to Antiochus, to whom the description applies. It seems probable that he meant an allegorical representative of the Jewish nation, in the same way as he speaks in the next chapter of the prince of Persia and the prince of Grecia; the term Messiah, or anointed, being applied to the prince of the Jews, to signify his superior holi-

ness.\* As the coming of the prince of Grecia, x. 30, appears to signify the beginning of the sovereignty of the Macedonians, so the coming of the anointed ruler, or of the rule of the anointed (*ὡς χριστου ἡγουμένου*), and his being cut off,† may signify the political regeneration of the Jewish nation under Nehemiah till its apparent extinction by Antiochus. During that interval Jerusalem was rebuilt, but the times were troublous. It is true, that seven weeks, or forty-nine years, from B. C. 536, bring us to B. C. 487, which year was not distinguished by any remarkable event, being twenty years before the return under Ezra. But here again we must be content to remain in ignorance, from our not knowing the chronology used by the author.

It has been thought by some that the commandment which went forth to restore and build Jerusalem, refers to the divine decree by the mouth of Jeremiah, B. C. 606, promising a return of the Jews after seventy years. Jer. xxix. 10; xxv. 12; xxvii. 12. Four hundred and ninety years from that date bring us to B. C. 116, as the time predicted for bringing in everlasting righteousness and anointing the Most Holy. It is remarkable that this is seven weeks, i. e. forty-eight to forty-nine years, from the death of Antiochus. This coincidence, however, does not enable us to solve the prophecy, for this latter subdivision of the time is there placed first; and the remaining subdivisions remain still unexplained. But there are strong reasons for interpreting the commandment only of the decree in the first year of Cyrus. This, although an edict of an heathen prince, was

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\* Schoettgen (*de Messiâ*, cap. i. 26) quotes several works to show that it was not unheard of among the Jews to consider Michael the Messiah. This would make the verse in question harmonize with x. 21.

† Theodotion's version, which is that inserted in the modern copies of the Septuagint, gives *ἐξολοθρευθησεται χρισμα*, the anointing shall perish.

considered by the Jews as divinely appointed to fulfil the words of Jeremiah;\* it formed one of the most conspicuous points in the scriptural history; it is evident that the writer of Daniel has the history in Chronicles and Ezra fully present to his recollection; he says that Daniel prayed in the first year of Darius the Mede, which, although usually placed about B.C. 538, he seems to consider as the expiration of the seventy years, (see ver. 19,) and, consequently, cotemporary with the decree of Cyrus, B.C. 536, whilst, on the other hand, the promise of Jeremiah, of a future restorer, could not with so much exactness be called a going forth of the commandment or word to restore and build Jerusalem.

It is not worth while to drag the reader through the endless commentaries on this prophecy: its difficulty is multiplied by the numerous readings both of the words and numbers which the different versions supply. Michaelis made a laborious investigation of these; and by taking three successive periods of seventy weeks of years, seventy single years, and sixty-two years, he makes the desolation coincide with the beginning of the Jewish war, A.D. 66. But he admits that, in order to make even this explanation cohere, he was obliged to select several unusual readings, depending each on isolated manuscripts, and to adopt the somewhat improbable hypothesis that the years were lunar instead of solar years.† He offers his explanation also as a very doubtful one.‡

The point chiefly interesting to us is, whether the prophecy agrees with the time of Jesus Christ.

\* See end of Chronicles and beginning of Ezra.

† "It seems more likely at first sight that solar years are predicted. Accordingly, I tried solar years with all the readings; but comparing the prophecy with history, I found no notable event coinciding with those years."—Michaelis on the Seventy Weeks, p. 203.

‡ "Jam ergo, si lubet, accipe a me, non versionem, sed dubitationes de Danielis vaticinio."—*Ibid.*, p. 5.



Now, from the decree of Cyrus . . . . .	Years. B. C. 536
Deduct 7 weeks or 49 years, and we are not near to Jesus Christ; take the 7 weeks and 62 weeks together, as the Septuagint does, and deduct 69 weeks, or . . . . .	483
we have . . . . .	B. C. 53
a year which has no relation to Jesus Christ.	

Sir Isaac Newton dates the commandment at Ezra's return with a body of Jews in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, or 4257 of the Julian period, = B. C. 457; add the whole 490 years, and we have

4747 or A. D. 34, when (or in A. D. 33) Christ was crucified.

But, to say nothing of the incorrectness of representing this as the end of the Jewish transgressions, (see conduct of the Zealots towards the law and temple,) it appears that this great commentator could only succeed to this extent in fitting in the whole 490 years, at the expense of a complete failure in disposing of the subdivisions; for he makes verse 25 refer to a rebuilding yet to come, and a second coming of Christ.

Others follow Africanus in dating from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem B. C 445 70 weeks, or 490 years, supposing them lunar years, are equal to 475 solar years . . . . .

475

A. D. 30

which is within a few years of the common date of Christ's death.

But in these explanations it is obvious that the date of the decree is selected arbitrarily, in order to make the 70 weeks, or 69 weeks, fall in with Christ's death. For it has been shown that it is unnatural to suppose that any other decree

could be meant than that of Cyrus, which was given at the time when Daniel is said to be praying. If we take the date of the word given to Jeremiah B. C. 606, the attempt to accommodate the time to Jesus Christ will be baffled still more completely.

The text concerning the cutting off of the Messiah is not quoted by the apostles, which would lead us to suppose that our common reading does not give the sense received in their time. But even if it were the true reading, it might be applied to any other pretender to the Messiahship who was put to death, as well as to Jesus. And this is the only coincidence worth noticing. For Jerusalem was taken and profaned many times; and the description of the actions of Antiochus must naturally apply in part to those of the Romans. But the desolation which they made under Titus was not immediately after the cutting off of Jesus Christ, but thirty-seven years later.

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The strong internal evidence that the prophetic parts of Daniel were written about the time of Antiochus is not counterbalanced by any external evidence, as may be seen in the review of the arguments on this point in the fourteenth chapter of Bishop Newton's Dissertations.

Although we be convinced by this examination of the book of Daniel, that it contains no prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, we can at the same time perceive how the disciples were led to draw from it, especially after the fall of Jerusalem, a strong confirmation of his claims. They knew little or nothing concerning Antiochus, and therefore parts of the book seemed to point to the events of their own day, which did in reality somewhat resemble those in the time of Antiochus. Moreover, Jesus himself assumed the title of Son of Man, given to the allegorical representative of the Jewish nation, in

Daniel. Add to this the text which admitted of the sense that the Messiah was to be cut off, and we need not be surprised that more searching critics than the apostles should have considered this book as the sure word of prophecy. But to the reader who will take the trouble to compare one part with another, in the manner here pursued, it is left to determine whether such a conclusion does not rest upon a total perversion of the real meaning of the book.

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Whilst the study of the prophecies convinces us of the absurdity of considering them as inspired predictions, it at the time enables us to comprehend the interest attached to them which supported the delusion. The sublime mystery of penetrating into the future is almost equalled by that of finding the present already foreknown in the past. The events of the day are raised into fulfilments of the divine decrees: an untoward catastrophe is softened, success is enhanced, by the proof which prophecy appears to bring, that all was appointed by the foreknowledge of God before the world began; and the energy of the agents is heightened rather than relaxed by the idea that they are the instruments of destiny, final links of the mysterious chain which connects remote foreknowledge and actual fulfilment.

There are few nations whose early literature does not contain predictions and pretended accomplishments of predictions. But Cumæ and Delphos lost their credit even in ancient times. The supposed Jewish oracles still play a conspicuous part in the religion of the day. Yet on comparing them closely with history, accomplishment and failure alternate to such an extent, that one important resemblance to their heathen kindred becomes palpable; their credit can only be maintained by preserving their ambiguity.

Egypt, for instance, which was to be "the basest of the kingdoms," Ezek. xxix. 15, ("and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt," xxx. 13,) was for three centuries, under the Ptolemies, one of the principal monarchies of the age. Babylon which "shall never be inhabited," apparently after its capture by the Medes, "and whose time is near to come," Isaiah xlii. 17—22, was inhabited by a diminished population for 245 years, until the building of the neighbouring city of Seleucia, after which it decayed gradually. Ezekiel prophesies that Nebuchadnezzar shall take Tyre, in which he is as correct as might be expected from a cotemporary of the event; but he adds "I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon: thou shalt be built no more," xxvi. 14: and "when I make thee a desolate city," (i. e. evidently from the connexion, on the capture by Nebuchadnezzar,) "I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God," ver. 19—21. Yet new Tyre, or Tyre of the island, considered by Pliny a part of the old city, and which from the description of Ezekiel appears to have been by him also included in the general name Tyre, continued to be a strong and considerable place long after the time of Alexander; it endured several sieges during the Crusades and afterwards; and has decayed gradually into an inconsiderable place. The "shalt be no more" of Ezekiel, repeated several times, is therefore accomplished by the decay of the city in the lapse of 2400 years. Bishop Newton explains for Ezekiel, that in this case, as in that of Babylon, the prophecy was to take effect, not all at once, but by degrees. Modern commentators have disco-



vered that, for the most part, the sense of the scripture prophecies can only be ascertained after the event. The prophecies against Edom, Moab, Ammon, &c. are evidently for the most part history; but when they reach into the future, limitations and exceptions are required. (See Jer. xlix. 18, on Edom.) The prophets delivered copious denunciations against all the nations and districts which annoyed the Jews. If a modern poet were to prophesy destruction and desolation under various figures against a dozen neighbouring towns or nations, who would be surprised to find after 2500 years an equal average of fulfilment?

The instance most resembling fulfilment is that of Jeremiah's prophecy, "Fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, . . . though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee," xxx. 11. Yet this is merely a natural patriotic wish, and it has not been fulfilled in the sense probably contemplated by Jeremiah; for a full end has been made of the Jews, as a nation, as completely as of Babylon. It is certainly true that the preservation of the Jews, as a distinct race, leaves a possibility of the more complete fulfilment of the prophecy at a future time. It is connected, however, with two others which were not fulfilled, viz. the high degree of security which Jacob should enjoy after his return from the Babylonish captivity, and the raising up of another David.

Another instance approaching to fulfilment is the spread of the Jewish religion or light among the Gentiles. Yet here also the prophecy was a natural patriotic wish, and it was very far from being exactly fulfilled according to the original meaning; for the Judaism which the Gentiles received was very different from the Jewish law which the prophets seem to have had in view (Isaiah xlii. 4, 21; Micah iv. 2): neither did the Gentiles come bending to receive it from Mount Zion. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea those nations shall be entirely wasted," Isaiah lx. 12. Instead of this the Jews perished, because they would not serve the Romans.

As to the New Testament fulfilling the prophecies of the Old,—in the two most conspicuous features of Jewish prophecy there could not be a more decided failure. A triumphant successor of David was promised, and a carpenter's son was crucified. Zion was to be exalted, and Zion was demolished. Nor were the Christian prophecies more fortunate.—The Son of man was to appear again before that generation passed away, and he has not yet appeared.

The cause of failure here is not the same as when predictions of natural phenomena fail; i. e. want of skill in the interpreters. No one pretends that a greater skill in the language of the prophecies would clear up these contradictions; that the reader of the common version, on acquiring sufficient Hebrew and Greek, would see things in a greatly different light. Unless he admit that wide figurative interpretation, which expands indefinitely the meaning of words, he must conclude that the voice prophesying through these records is different from that prophesying in nature, in as much as the one is always right, the other sometimes right and sometimes wrong.

The *Æneid* contains many prophetic allusions to the affairs of Rome, and in the sixth book the shade of Anchises shows himself well acquainted with Roman History up to the time of Augustus, but attempts to foretell nothing beyond it. From passages of this kind the common reader would have inferred the time of the writer to be about or after that date. But suppose that Virgil had concealed his name and date, and that some religious interest were attached to the belief in the divine inspiration of his writings; it would then be taken for granted that the author lived at the beginning, not the end, of the prophecy, and the whole poem might by the allegorizing system be easily converted into a prophetic type. If the



interpreter were a Catholic, the victories of the Trojan hero might prefigure the small beginnings of the Roman see on the same plains of Latium; his pious abandonment of the Carthaginian queen being exactly the type of Papal Rome's compulsory separation by divine decree from its mistress Constantinople. The prediction of Anchises, "*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*," was fully verified, as Peter's pence could bear witness. "*Cœlique meatus describent alii melius*," Galileo proved to be true. "*Debellare superbos*," how exactly fulfilled in the person of the Emperor Henry IV., and "*parcere subjectis*," in the lenity shown by Pius VII. towards Napoleon, who was, or ought to have been, spiritually his subject! Certainly a Papist, who might be inclined thus to turn Virgil to account, would find less labour than has been encountered by Protestant divines, with the Book of Daniel, for the sake of identifying the Pope with the "man of sin."

But it is said by Christians that many of the prophecies remain yet to be fulfilled. This may very probably come to appear true as events pass on, for the continued vicissitudes of things may naturally increase the number of apparent correspondences; and there is besides this a deeper reason. Written prophecy itself, if embodied in the literature of a nation, becomes a cause of no small power, and may contain amongst its effects tendencies to its own fulfilment. The anticipations of ancestors, the aspirations of patriots, and the visions of poets, when expressed in the shape of prophecy, may awaken in some breasts a more ardent desire to give the response. Instances are on record of attempts made with a view to fulfil ancient prophecies.\* And considering the permanent interest which the Hebrew literature has excited amongst its own and other nations, it is highly probable that its prophecies will go on producing a concurrence of inclinations to witness their fulfilment, till at last, in a more closely corresponding sense than hitherto, "the tribes of Jacob shall be raised up, and instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree in his heritages, and the desolations of Israel shall be repaired, and his wastes inhabited."

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\* Onias, who built the temple at Heliopolis to fulfil Isaiah xix. 19, one instance. The rebuilding of the temple by Cyrus to fulfil the Jewish prophecies would be another; but the historical truth of Josephus in this account may be doubted. A kindred case is that of Columbus, who "believed his great discoveries announced in the Apocalypse and Isaiah, and identified the mines of Hispaniola with the golden quarries which furnished materials to Solomon."—Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, vol. iii. p. 27.

## CHAPTER XV.

WHETHER JESUS FORETOLD HIS OWN DEATH AND  
RESURRECTION.

MATTHEW says, xvi. 21, "From that time forth," (viz. soon after Herod sought to apprehend Jesus,) "began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." And again, xx. 17, "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." Similar predictions occur, Matt. xvi. 24, xvii. 22, xxvi. 2, xxvi. 32. "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." Mark viii. 31, ix. 9, 31, x. 32, xiv. 28. Luke ix. 22, 44, xiii. 33, xviii. 31. John vii. 8, viii. 28, &c.

This was speaking so plainly that we cannot imagine how the disciples could have misunderstood him. However firm might have been their first expectation of a temporal Messiah, they must have been strangely inattentive not to be prepared for things of which they had been warned so often and so clearly. As the history stands, they seem to have treated the admonitions of Jesus on such interesting points with a carelessness almost irreverent. Luke says, ix. 45, "They understood not this saying, and it was hid from them." But this may be merely his own reflection, and the explanation which

he chose to suggest in order to account for the strangeness of the disciples' conduct. The explanation, however, is by no means satisfactory, since the language attributed to Jesus is very intelligible.

Immediately after the supposed confidential prediction of his sufferings to the twelve, Matt. xx. 20, two of these very twelve come to ask for seats on the right and left of his throne. They all frequently dispute which shall be the greatest. They seem full of hope and expectation until they reach Jerusalem. They think more of their twelve thrones over the twelve tribes of Israel than of death and suffering. When nigh to Jerusalem, they expect the kingdom of God to appear immediately; and when, at last, Jesus is taken and put to death, exactly according to the supposed predictions, they all seem taken by surprise, and forsake him. Cleopas is represented as saying; "The chief priests and our rulers have crucified him. *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel;*" showing clearly surprise and disappointment at his death, which seemed to have ended the matter. They were so far from expecting him to rise again, that most of them were with difficulty induced to believe it, even when they were told that he was risen. And John himself unconsciously gives a final contradiction to these stories of predictions, by saying of the disciples who came to the sepulchre, xx. 9, "*For as yet they knew not the Scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead.*" Can it be believed that any of the disciples, much less the whole body of them, would have quite forgotten such a thing, if it had really been foretold to them so clearly and so often?

This discrepancy between the disciples' conduct and the supposed predictions is so palpable, that fiction appears manifestly in one or the other. And it is the more natural to infer it in the latter; for the disciples loved to represent every ac-

tion of Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy, and especially his death, by which means the greatest cause of scandal was converted into an evidence in his favour. As he himself also bore the character of a prophet, nothing could appear more for his honour and dignity than to predict whatever was remarkable in his own career; for thus reverses and death, instead of baffling him, appeared as ministers to the fulfilment of his own predictions.\*

The charm of marvellousness which is thrown into a narrative by linking events with predictions, induced Herodotus, Josephus, and other historians prone to embellish, to indulge largely in this kind of poetical fiction. The writers of the four Gospels had a stronger temptation to put their own historical knowledge into the mouth of Jesus in the shape of prophecy; and accordingly numerous events in the history of Jesus are preceded by a closely agreeing prediction; for instance, the denial by Peter, the betrayal by Judas, the finding of the colt, the selection of the room for the passover; a few circumstances being added to make the accounts coherent, such as any writer of tolerable imagination might have supplied. Gradual exaggeration rather than wilful fiction might, however, in many cases, explain the manner in which the account originated. For example, it appears, from the reproaches of the multitude, that Jesus had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again." John sees in this, after the event, a prediction by Jesus of his own death and resurrection; and it is easy to imagine that, in passing through several narrations, it might have been enlarged into as complete a prophecy as that in Matt. xx. 17.

On the other hand, the contemplation by Jesus of his own

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\* John xiii. 19, "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he." xiv. 29, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."



death is mingled in so many ways with his sayings and actions after his last departure from Galilee, and the institution of the last supper is so standing a memorial of his having in some degree foreseen it, that there seems to be some mixture of truth in the above narratives.

The most probable conclusion appears to be, that Jesus began to contemplate the *possibility* of his death, when he found himself compelled, by the ill-will of Herod, to leave Galilee, and that he began then to warn his followers that no one who was unprepared to risk his life was fit for the kingdom of God; that after his arrival at Jerusalem it became daily more evident to him that he must suffer as a seditious innovator, and that his last discourses contained many anticipations of his approaching fate.

It is evident that he could not have given any clear announcement on this subject whilst in Galilee, because up to the time of his arrival at Jerusalem the disciples expected that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. They continued to expect a temporal throne even much later. Some occasional and ambiguous hints dropped by him concerning the dangers to be expected at Jerusalem, being remembered after his death, might have given rise to the belief that he spake of his death "when he was yet in Galilee," Luke xxiv. 6. Also, the style of some real discourses shortly before his death may have been transposed to occasions much earlier. For it appears very clear that none of the Evangelists had much regard to the order of time or place in relating the discourses of Jesus. There was no reporter at hand to take down these discourses as they were delivered. They must have been repeated by the disciples from memory, and could have been preserved only by tradition, until some one undertook to write them down. Whilst this loose method of preserving them prevailed, the sayings of Jesus were probably much altered,

and accommodated to the new ideas which became prevalent in the church. It is not unlikely even that many sayings gradually became current as his, which never proceeded from him in any shape. During the interval of nearly forty years between his death and the writing of Matthew's Gospel, the Christian church had become familiarized to the idea that his death happened in fulfilment of prophecy, and was contemplated by himself as part of his mission. It was very natural, then, for an advocate of the sect, at the latter period, to represent Jesus himself as preaching in accordance with these notions.

The following language attributed to Jesus bears the impress of fiction. Matt. xii. 40, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." In the story of Jonah, there is no reason to doubt that the time was literally what is written, Jonah i. 17; but Jesus was in the tomb only from Friday night until Sunday morning, or one day and two nights. There is no evidence that this interval could have been called, in common Jewish phraseology, *τρεις ημερας και τρεις νυκτας*. Even though this mode of computation were used for some legal purposes, a prophet would not select language conveying in the obvious sense a mistake; but it agrees with the style of Matthew to sacrifice correctness as to facts for the sake of accommodating the precise words in Jonah to Christ. Mark perceived, probably, the absurdity, since he has omitted the allusion to Jonas. Luke has preserved it, wording it so as to avoid the more glaring part of the inconsistency. Luke xi. 30, "For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation."\*

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\* In the Gemara there is much discussion concerning the duration of the three *oune* (*noctiduum*, *νυχθημερον*) allowed for ceremonial uncleanness. There was a tradition that R. Eliezer ben Azariah had said, "A day and a

night make up the *oune*, and a part is as the whole ;” with which R. Ismael agreed. But R. Jochanan and Akiba said, that either a day or a night constituted an *oune*.—See Lightfoot. The difficulty of determining the point seems to show that Eliezer’s method of calculation was not in common use. The only argument brought by Rosenmüller in favour of such a supposition is, that the apostles did not encounter objections from the Jews on this subject. Jerome (on Jonah i. 17,) admits the difficulty of the passage in Matthew, and says that the parts of each 24 hours must be considered as the whole ; but he quotes no Jewish usage in proof, and concludes thus : “ Certainly this seems to me the explanation ; but if any one does not adopt it, and can give a better exposition, his opinion ought to be preferred.”

It is true that Christ is often said to have risen the third day, and the Jews might have expressed this “risen after three days.” But the addition “and three nights” renders the place clearly the studied parallel of Jonah i. 17 ; and this use of the prophet is more natural to the evangelist than to Jesus.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ON THE CHARACTER, VIEWS, AND DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

THE histories which have come down to us of the life of Christ are scanty, and, as has been shown, in all probability much mixed with fable and with the ideas of later times. Still they present to us a character so peculiar and so strongly marked, as to force upon us the impression that it was a real one. Even though the supposition that there never was such a person as Jesus Christ were not manifestly absurd in an historical view, the existence of the books before us might be sufficient to convince us that it must be abandoned; for invention generally falls into some well-known track of ideas; and it is in the highest degree improbable that several writers could concur in an accordant and well-sustained delineation of a singular, but yet wholly imaginary, character. The attentive perusal of the four Gospels leaves, then, the conviction, that Jesus really lived; and, further, that there was in him a combination of traits which do not frequently meet in the same individual, the result being a character which has few or no parallels in history. It has been often said that this singularity of character does itself afford an evidence of the divinity of his mission. But the inference is unwarrantable, unless it can be proved that the character contains something necessarily superhuman; whereas it may, perhaps, be shown that each feature of it is resolvable into the operation of feelings and powers common, more or less, to all men, influenced by the circumstances in which he was placed. The supernatural character and offices attributed to



Jesus have generally prevented Christians from examining this question freely; any other language than that of panegyric or homage has been deemed by them unsuitable and irreverent; and a kind of halo has thus been thrown around the founder of Christianity, which has contributed to the difficulty of seeing him in his natural aspect. Let us be on our guard no less against the over-strained admiration of his followers than against the attacks of his opponents, and endeavour to penetrate through all that confuses or dazzles the sight, in order to gain a distinct view of the carpenter's son of Nazareth.

I. Jesus was an enthusiast. This was not an un- An enthusiast.  
natural effect of the study of the Jewish scriptures.

He had heard or read from his infancy the history and prophetic writings of his country, which, from their sacred associations, their antiquity, their record of miraculous interpositions, their claim to divine inspiration, and their wild imagery, were of a nature most impressive to the imagination. The prophetic writings were especially of this character; their real origin and meaning were imperfectly known; the people considered them, and the scribes pretended to consider them, as divine oracles. From the time of the Maccabees, the prophets, as well as the law, had been established in popular veneration, and to question the authority of either was equivalent to denying the national creed, and forsaking the first principles of religion. Such scepticism never entered into the minds of the religiously educated Jews, like Jesus. He, therefore, read the books of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi, not as interesting poetical remains, but as oracles of great and pressing import, as foretelling fearful signs and wonders, and mighty revolutions to be accomplished in the latter times. One principal topic of these books is the general perfection and happiness of the world at some distant

age. This subject has interested the feelings and exercised the imagination of many men in all countries; but in the books in question it was combined with other topics peculiarly animating to the Jews, viz. that the chosen people were to be the instruments of God for bringing the world to the true worship; and that in the new æra the throne of Israel would be restored by a second David, and all former monarchies surpassed by the splendour of the kingdom of the saints of heaven, and of God. That such a belief, sanctioned by all the authority of their national religion, should have been highly exciting to the Jews under a foreign yoke, is less surprising than that any could have remained unmoved by it. When Jesus was eight years old, all Judea was roused by the bold doctrines of Judas and Sadduc; and it cannot be doubted that the precepts and example of his countryman must have exercised a potent influence over the poetic mind of the young Galilean. By dwelling long upon a favourite project, the mind easily acquires the belief that it has a secret mission to fulfil it; and thus Jesus, from contemplating the kingdom of God, was led to believe himself to be the predestined king. This idea of his own mission was confirmed by the power which he found his preaching to possess over the multitudes, and the apparent success of his compliance with their petitions to expel demons.

Such an enthusiasm was by no means irrational in one situated like Jesus. On the contrary, admitting the inspiration of the prophets, the strictest reasoner must allow that the views of Jesus were well grounded; and then it becomes merely a sign of mental vigour, that he acted according to them.

It may be said, that such an enthusiasm would have given way at the prospect of sufferings and death. But this is not evident. Under the character of prophet and messiah, Jesus

had traversed Galilee, and attached to himself many followers; his belief in his divine mission had been confirmed by the elevation conceded to him by those around him; and that which was at first enthusiasm became a settled principle of action. Besides, to men of a high tone of character, intent upon great objects, and especially believing, like Jesus, in the immortality of the soul, the prospect of death has much less terror than that of an inglorious retreat. Considering the position arrived at by Jesus when Herod was about to arrest him, we should be prepared to see a more surprising phenomenon in a sudden renunciation of his claims and a retirement into disgraceful obscurity, than in his actual proceeding to Jerusalem at the risk of his life. On approaching the city, and on perceiving that still the kingdom of heaven did not appear, that no sufficient human or divine aid was near to effect the regeneration which he had hoped to bring to Israel, he began to look upon his fate as inevitable, and, as it approached nearer, prepared to meet it with a dignity becoming the character he had assumed. Enthusiasm is, to a certain degree, flexible; and Jesus being forced to see the hopelessness of the immediate coming of the Messiah's kingdom, adapted his views to the course of events, and taught that the Messiah must suffer before he should reign. To his associates he was still the Messiah; he promised them hereafter the kingdom which it was plain they would not obtain immediately; and to the last maintained, and believed, that he was the Son of Man predicted by the prophets, who was to come on the clouds of heaven, to introduce the kingdom of the saints. Dan. vii. 13, 14.

II. Jesus was a revolutionist. He expected to be king of the Jews, and to restore the kingdom of Israel. This appears from his lamentation over Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy

A revolutionist.

children together, and ye would not ;” from his selecting the number twelve for his apostles, in agreement with the number of the tribes, and of seventy for the disciples, who went to proclaim him, in imitation of the number of the Jewish Sanhedrim ; from his promising twelve thrones to the disciples ; and from his assuming the titles, Son of David, Messiah, King of Israel, and King of the Jews. The latter was the office of the Messiah most dwelt upon in the prophets, and most currently attributed to him in popular opinion. All this confirms the truth of part, at least, of the accusation brought against him, viz. “He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee, to this place, saying that he himself is Christ, a king,” Luke xxiii. 2, 5. “And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou sayest it.” \* This admission of Jesus himself, together with the notoriety of the fact, induced Pilate to inscribe on the cross, “This is the king of the Jews.” Now it is evident that the title, “King of the Jews,” or of Israel, was understood in its obvious and literal sense by the Jewish populace, and also that this sense was included in the character attributed by the prophets to the Messiah. Since Jesus in assuming the title, and during the whole of his career, allowed it to be understood in its current acceptance, it is very improbable that he himself should have taken it in a sense so unthought of as that of a merely spiritual king.

It seems likely that he expected a popular movement to

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\* According to Schoettgen, this was a solemn form of affirmation, of which he quotes two instances. Berachoth Hier. citante Wagenseil ad Sota, p. 1001. The Zipporenses asked if R. Judah were dead. The son of Kaphra answered, *Ye have said*.—Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32, 2. They said to him, Is the Rabbi dead? He answered, *Ye have said*.—See Horæ Hebraicæ in Matt. xxvi. 25.



follow his preaching, towards the beginning of his career, in Galilee ; for the main purport of this preaching was to urge the people to prepare for the kingdom of heaven, and for a sign of adherence, he required his converts to follow him. Matt. iv. 19, 25, viii. 22, ix. 9, x. 38. This agrees with the complaint of Josephus, Ant. xx. viii. that men pretending to divine inspiration induced the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, pretending that God would show them signals of liberty, or deliverance. Such solemn warnings of the approach of the kingdom as Jesus delivered to whole towns and provinces, imply that he intended more than merely to require preparation for the reception of purer moral and spiritual doctrines. If he had intended only this, he would surely have refrained from using language which, in the existing temper of the nation, was so likely to be mistaken for a promise of national deliverance. The appearance of other pretenders of this kind made it the more necessary to distinguish his mission carefully from theirs, if it were in reality intended to be of a totally different character.

The injunctions given so frequently, to follow him, agree with the accusation "he stirreth up the people," and indicate that Jesus expected the coming of some extraordinary event, such as a national regeneration, which would interfere with the common routine of life, and which was so near at hand that men, in order to prepare for it, must forsake their occupations, kindred, and all that they had, not looking back even to perform the most pressing ordinary duties. "And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead." Matt. viii. 21, 22. "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee ; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the

plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke ix. 61, 62. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Matt. xix. 21. "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Matt. xix. 29. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,\* and follow me." Ch. xvi. 24. This interruption of the common business of life was quite unnecessary for the introduction of a purer creed of religion and morals. This end might have been effected by simply preaching at each town or synagogue, the hearers being exhorted, as they were by Paul in later times, to continue in the vocations wherewith they had been called. What could Jesus do with crowds of followers, and what motive could he have for encouraging an excitement which must bring so much inconvenience and hazard upon himself, unless he really expected that some

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\* The preceding chapter tends to prove that this is one of those speeches in which the writer has allowed himself to introduce his own knowledge of subsequent events. That Jesus did not really use these words concerning the taking up of the cross, is inferred from the inconsistency of such predictions with many important parts of his history. But that he said the rest, or something equivalent to it, may be admitted from its agreeing not only with numerous other injunctions of the same kind, but with some of the principal events in his history; for multitudes did follow him, and this was one of the grounds of the accusation which led to his death. It is true, that conclusions arrived at in this manner cannot, in most cases, be considered as more than highly probable conjectures; but it has been already represented to the reader, that the materials remaining for the life of Jesus, do not, in many parts, admit of more than this. Those who have once allowed that there may possibly be an admixture of fiction in the report of the speeches of Jesus, must either renounce the whole as being of too doubtful authority to deserve attention, or endeavour to separate the truth from the fiction by a careful analysis.

extraordinary change in the state of the nation was about to take place?

The exhortations to follow him are too frequent and too general to allow us to suppose that they were intended only for a few select disciples. Multitudes did follow him, and evidently with his permission and sanction. Matt. ix. 36, xii. 15, xv. 32, xix. 2. But after they had accompanied him for some time, he occasionally found it necessary, from fatigue or from a sense of inconvenience, to avoid them, or to send them away. The expectation of the kingdom was not sufficient to maintain crowds in the deserts; and in the absence or delay of signs from heaven, they must, of necessity, be dismissed. Matt. xiii. 36, xiv. 22.

After he had preached through most of the cities of Galilee, he began to upbraid Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, because they repented not; and, according to Matthew, it was *at that time* that he uttered the prayer, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," xi. 25. Since he had been preaching to these cities to prepare for the kingdom of God, and since in the case of individuals he required some sign of adherence to himself, such as a profession of faith, or following him, it seems probable that by the repentance which he required of the towns, he meant not only the expression of contrition, but a recognition of his authority, and some public demonstration of preparation for the kingdom which he was about to introduce. This would account for the repulsive conduct of the towns of Galilee. The allusion to the ignorance of the "wise and prudent" in the prayer immediately following, seems to be a reproof directed against the men of influence and authority in those towns for their rejection of him. It was quite natural that the magistrates,

rulers of synagogues, Pharisees, and other persons of weight, on whom rested the responsibility of preserving order in the province, should share the feelings of the priests at Jerusalem, and, in later times, of Josephus, and be anxious to curb rather than encourage the inclination of the multitude, to look for sudden political innovations and changes, whether to be brought about by human or superhuman means. Jesus, coming amongst them with the warning that the kingdom was nigh at hand, resembled too nearly Judas the Galilean, and later innovators, to be looked upon otherwise than with coldness and suspicion;\* and these pressing political considerations made the chief men in each town, with a few exceptions, disregard that which was superior and more innoxious in the claims of Jesus—the character of moral teacher and prophet. That which is of least interest to us, the political aspect of the proceedings of Jesus, was to them necessarily of most urgent importance.

There is a passage in Luke somewhat at variance with this view of the expectations of Jesus. “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within (or among) you.” Luke xvii. 20, 21. But this passage occurs as the introduction to a discourse which alludes

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\* This suspicion was strongly expressed, after the arrival at Jerusalem, in the question, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?” The Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, Luke xiii. 1, were probably more open promulgators of the doctrines of Judas, because the procurators seldom interfered with the Jewish rites, unless the assemblies bore a seditious appearance. The answer of Jesus expresses no small degree of sympathy. Those Galileans were not to be considered sinners any more than men who might have met their fate by an untoward accident; but all who did not repent at his preaching, would as surely meet a similar fate, and in such a case justly.



very plainly\* to the siege of Jerusalem, and seems, therefore, to be one of those which we must regard as expressing more of the views of the writer's own time than of those of Jesus. By the time of the siege of Jerusalem, it had been seen that the kingdom which Jesus had announced as nigh at hand had not come with that open display which was at first expected; and it was therefore supposed to consist in the gradual and noiseless spread of his doctrine and church. Of the same character, probably, is the passage, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time (i. e. until the siege of Jerusalem) the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Luke xvi. 16.

If, however, the passage just quoted seem to render it doubtful whether Jesus himself expected some approaching national change, when he preached throughout the country that the kingdom of God was nigh,—where can we find evidence more decisive than the testimony of the disciples, who had heard Jesus himself, and consequently were better able to judge what his meaning was than readers who are obliged to gather it from a collection of interpolated fragments? Now Luke says, that when they approached Jerusalem, "they (meaning apparently the disciples,† or including them) thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear," xix. 11. That their idea of the kingdom included a national deliverance, is proved by the speech attributed to Cleopas, "we

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\* Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

† Compare xviii. 34, with this verse. The *αυτους* of ver. 11, might, according to the rules of composition, refer to the *απαυτες* of ver. 7, all the company. But nothing indicates that Luke intends to except the twelve as not sharing the delusion. The whole strain of the narrative is to the contrary purport, as well as the demand of James and John in the other evangelists. The words *because they were nigh Jerusalem*, imply that he addressed especially those who had been his companions during the journey thither.

trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," and that supposed to be spoken by the apostles at the ascension, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" It is a violent and unwarrantable hypothesis to suppose that the constant attendants upon Jesus had grossly misunderstood him concerning the chief subject of his preaching; one, too, on which they themselves had been sent out by him to preach. We must, therefore, conclude, that up to the time of his arrival at Jerusalem he had authorized them to expect, and did himself expect, in the kingdom of God, an approaching national deliverance.

According to Luke, Jesus spoke a parable to correct the notion that his kingdom should *immediately* appear. This parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom, and to return, postpones the coming of the kingdom to a future uncertain date; and it is remarkable that from this time, the discourses alluding to the kingdom of heaven, instead of representing it as nigh at hand, place it after the siege of Jerusalem. At the passover supper Jesus is made to say, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come," Luke xxii. 18; and the following verses imply that this would be after his death. In this, and in the other discourses referred to, we perceive, amidst the manifest interpolations of later times, an alteration in the tone of Jesus concerning the kingdom; and coupling this alteration with the lamentation over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not," we are led to conjecture that Jesus himself must have changed his views about the time of his arrival at Jerusalem, so far, at least, as to admit that the national deliverance, of which he had expected to be the instrument, was not to be looked for within any definite period. But although his opinion concerning the date of the kingdom's manifestation

might fluctuate, his ideas concerning its nature do not hitherto appear to have materially changed ; for the parable, as given by Luke, evidently contains a larger mixture of temporal than of spiritual anticipations, and represents the Messiah under the common notion of a triumphant successor of David. It is said the nobleman's "citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." The faithful servants are promised the rule over cities ; and the contumacious citizens are thus condemned, "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me."\*

John alone makes Jesus say that his kingdom is not of this world, xviii. 36. It has been observed that this Gospel was written 27 years after the fall of Jerusalem, when the original notion of the kingdom of God, as regenerated Israel, was almost forgotten, or merged in that of a spiritual dominion over all mankind. Hence the different tone of John's Gospel is insufficient to invalidate the conclusions which we can gather from the three earlier ones, respecting Christ's views of his kingdom. Even in this Gospel, however, there are some traces of the earlier temporal anticipations. "Nathaniel answered, and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel," i. 49. "And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon ; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion ; behold thy king cometh, sitting on an ass's colt," xii. 14, 15.

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\* Since Matthew's version of the parable differs considerably from Luke's, it is probable that both differ from what was originally said by Jesus. I assume Luke's to be the more correct, because the character attributed by him to the king agrees better with the original notion of the Messiah than that given by Matthew, who makes him the judge of all nations ; an idea which, it appears from the Acts, became prevalent after the admission of the Gentiles.

In John alone, also, it is related that on one occasion Jesus avoided the multitude, lest they should take him by force to make him a king, vi. 15. This might be true, and yet only prove that he did not then consider the proper time arrived for declaring himself openly. In the same manner he enjoined strict secrecy to his disciples on announcing to them his claim of the Messiahship, and avoided giving a direct answer to the question of John's disciples, "Art thou he that should come," the Messiah or expected deliverer, "or look we for another?" His intention at first seems to have been to content himself with preparing the people for the kingdom, until the moment should arrive when some striking manifestation of divine aid should enable him to declare that the kingdom was come, and to ascend unopposed the throne of David. But this cautious reserve was thrown aside on his arrival at Jerusalem, when he allowed the multitude of the disciples to proclaim before him, "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord," Luke xix. 38, and encouraged them to persevere in these evidently seditious cries in spite of the remonstrances of the Pharisees. This conduct, so unlike that which he had pursued in Galilee, might proceed from the impossibility which he found of maintaining his reserve any longer. He had arrived at a point when he must either renounce or publish his claims; and since the general tone of the discourses attributed to him about this time indicates an abated confidence in his expectation of immediate success, the apparent recklessness which he now displayed might proceed from an internal determination to encounter martyrdom willingly, whenever it might arrive. It is difficult, however, to ascertain with any degree of precision what were the views and expectations of Jesus at this trying juncture; and we should, perhaps, err in attributing to him any determinate view whatever. In looking at the past, we are apt to attri-



bute to the actors views having a reference to subsequent events, the knowledge of which is fixed in our own minds, but which, being to them future, could have no influence upon them. The position in which Jesus was placed on his arrival at Jerusalem was one which rendered it peculiarly difficult to form a resolution without waiting for a further development of events. He knew not what a day might bring forth; each succeeding hour might be the one destined to see the advent of the kingdom; and the hosannas of the crowd might only be the harbingers of those of a legion of angels. Hence, there would be no absurdity in supposing that there was some fluctuation in the views of Jesus himself at this period, and that the enthusiasm of the multitude revived for a moment his own expectation of the approach of the kingdom; but that subsequent events forced him to recur to the anticipation of his death.

Although it thus appears that Jesus included a national deliverance in his idea of the kingdom of heaven, and that he endeavoured to bring the whole people into a state of excitement, which was to be the precursor of some important political change,—it does not follow, of necessity, that he should have given indications of a plan of armed rebellion against the Romans. The key to his conduct seems to be that he relied principally on the divine intervention promised by the prophets. When we reflect that these were read daily as oracles of undoubted truth, and that many passages in them clearly countenanced such an idea, we need not be surprised that it was taken up even by some minds of a superior cast. Take, for instance, the passage of Zechariah, chap. xiv., which promises that, in the day of the Lord, “the Lord shall fight against the nations, and his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof

toward the east, and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south," &c.\* Things similar to this, it was supposed, had once happened. If the Red Sea divided, and Sinai shook, when the Lord delivered his people from Egypt, a prophet like unto Moses might hope to see the divine arm displayed in an equally effective manner to rescue his servant Israel from the task-masters of Rome.

Jesus, then, followed the rest of his countrymen in believing that one part of the office of the Messiah was to restore the throne of Israel; but the character of prophet and teacher seems to have agreed better with his temper and habits of thought. The preliminary office of preaching repentance and preparation suited him better than the task of guiding the excitement into action. The poetical imagery and inspiring strains of the prophets, more than the desire of political power, awakened his enthusiasm to the quest of the visionary kingdom; and he found a more congenial employment in dilating on its sublime prospects, than in entering into those political intrigues and daring enterprises which form the gratification of ordinary revolutionists. His prototypes were Nathan or Isaiah, rather than Joshua or Gideon. His mind was of that contemplative and imaginative cast, which appears too fine for the coarser turmoils of the world; and he appears to us more in agreement with the general aspect of his character presented to us, when pouring out his rich stores of parable and precept on the Mount or by the sea-side, than when driving the buyers and sellers from the Temple. The assumption of the Messiahship necessarily

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\* That this passage, amongst others, had been in the thoughts of Jesus, seems probable from Matt. xxi. 21.

led him to the adoption of views partly political; but his apparent disposition to content himself with merely delivering exhortations, warnings, and precepts, so long as he was allowed to do so unmolested, seems to indicate that the character of a moral and intellectual leader was more natural to him; and it might be an impression of this kind which contributed after his death to the disciples' ready abandonment of political projects, and to their adoption, in later times, of the doctrine that his kingdom was not of this world.

III. Jesus was a reformer. He opposed the A reformer. dogmas of the Scribes and Pharisees, disregarded their interpretations of the law and traditions, and set the example of appealing freely to the mind's natural and independent dictates. He relieved benevolence and good sense from the pressure of established authorities, and taught that religion consists in the internal purity of the thoughts, and in the practice of morality, rather than in the performance of rites and ceremonies. Although these ideas were not new among the Jews, the state of their sects in the time of Jesus, the tendency to ostentatious ritualism among the Pharisees, and to monastic austerities among the Essenes,—gave to the man who could prefer to recall the purer lessons of Micah and Isaiah, and to urge the claims of mercy rather than of sacrifice, a title to be considered both as an independent thinker and a reformer.

But the full extent of the reform which the Christian sect introduced into Judaism does not appear to have been attempted,—it is doubtful if it was contemplated even, by Jesus himself. He observed the ritual law of Moses, frequently gave his sanction to it, and we cannot discover that he ever authorized its disuse. After his death, his followers appear for a considerable time to have had no idea of for-

saking the Mosaic institutes; insomuch that the first proposal to dispense with them nearly created a schism, and appeared to the heads of the church a case so novel, that it required a special council to decide upon it.

This view of the conduct of Jesus, with respect to the laws of Moses, agrees with the silence of Josephus concerning him, when lamenting the disuse of the ancient Jewish rites. *Antiq.* xviii. chap. 1. If he had considered Jesus as the prime mover in this bold innovation, he could hardly have avoided alluding to him in this place, especially as the disuse of the law among the greater part of the Christian sect, when Josephus wrote, pointed Jesus out to his particular notice. But he accuses Judas the Galilean of having caused the change in the customs of their fathers by introducing a new system of philosophy, and thus tacitly exonerates Jesus. This innovation of his predecessor and countryman Judas renders the conservatism of Jesus, in respect to the law of Moses, the more remarkable.

Hence the merit of Jesus, as a reformer, consists rather in the general liberal and enlightened tone of his teaching, which contributed to prepare the way for the changes introduced afterwards into Judaism chiefly by Paul, than in any decided reformation proposed by himself. From his conduct, it appears even very improbable that he himself would have been prepared to go so far in the path of reformation or destruction as the apostle of the Gentiles, and to admit that the law was superseded by faith, and that in Christ there was neither circumcision nor uncircumcision.\*

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\* Luke xvi. 17: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." This appears to have been a Rabbinical saying. *Sohar Genes*: "Although all men in the world should be gathered together to abolish Jod, which is the least letter in the law, they will not succeed." In Matthew v. 18, we find the addition, "till all be fulfilled." But this addition, and the preceding verse, have the appearance of ana-



We are led by this to another interesting but difficult inquiry, viz. how far Jesus himself contemplated the admission of the Gentiles into his kingdom.

Many of the speeches attributed to Jesus in the four Gospels evidently allude to, or imply a knowledge of, this enlargement of his church. Matt. viii. 11, 12: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness."—xxi. 43: "Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you (from the parable of the husbandmen, evidently the Jews), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."—xxiv. 31: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."—xxv. 32: "And before him shall be gathered all nations."—xxvi. 13: "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."—xxviii. 19: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." Luke ii. 10: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."—32: "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Yet we find some speeches of Jesus of a very different character, indicating that he considered his mission to be to the Jews only. Matt. x. 5, 6: "Go not into the way of the

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chronism, from their meeting an objection which does not seem likely to have existed during the life of Jesus. No one then accused him of destroying the law and the prophets. But from the time of the Gentile controversy the Jews often made this a ground of accusation against his sect.

Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”—  
xv. 24: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Luke makes the angel say to Mary, i. 32, 33, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Mary says, ver. 54, 55, “He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers.” The claim of Zaccheus to salvation is made by Jesus to depend upon his being considered a son of Abraham. Luke xix. 9.

Now of these two classes of sayings, which has the better claim to be considered as faithfully representing the views of Jesus himself? The latter; because they represent opinions which were grown out of date at the time when the books were written, and therefore the writers could have no motive for inserting them, unless they were well-known relics of some of the discourses of Jesus. Such a speech as, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” was totally at variance with the state and prospects of the church at the time of the fall of Jerusalem, when, as the writer himself intimates, the kingdom of Christ was passing away to the Gentiles; but it agrees with the actual facts in the life of Jesus, who was a Jew, spent his life amongst his own nation, and had, as far as we can learn, very little intercourse with or knowledge of the rest of the world. Whereas the sayings of the contrary description, concerning the extension of the kingdom, represent exactly what may be supposed to have been the opinions prevalent at the date of the writing, when Christianity had been diffused widely through the Roman empire, and the Jewish church had become insigni-

ficant in comparison with its numerous younger sisters of the Gentiles; but they cannot be attributed to Christ himself otherwise than as prophecies.

Another and perhaps stronger argument to show that Christ took the more limited view of his kingdom, is found in the conduct of his followers. They continued till after the death of Stephen to preach the word to Jews only, Acts xi. 19; and appear to have been brought into contact with the Gentiles in consequence of the gradual extension of their society, the persecution concerning Stephen, and other incidental circumstances, rather than in pursuance of a system of universal missions, which the supposed words of Jesus, Matt. xxviii. 19, Acts i. 8, seem to enjoin. The first Gentile conversions created all the surprise which one would expect from an unforeseen turn of things. Acts x. 45: "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."—xi. 18: "When they (the church at Jerusalem) heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." It was made a matter of accusation against Peter that he went in unto men uncircumcised, and did eat with them; and he justifies himself, not by referring to any of the many supposed sayings of Jesus before us concerning the universality of his kingdom, and the admission of other sheep into his fold, but by relating a recent vision sent to him with the special object to authorize this new direction of proselytism. In the council concerning the necessity of keeping the law, no reference is made to the authority of Jesus himself, although any sayings of his authorizing the admission of the Gentiles would have supplied most pertinent arguments. If he had really said that many should come from the east and the west, to sit

down in the kingdom of God, and that his gospel should be preached in the whole world, with what infinitely greater effect might James have quoted such sayings of the Messiah himself, than an obscure prophecy of Amos about building again the tabernacle of David! Since Luke has given a brief sketch of several of the speeches at this council, it is probable that he has noticed all the principal arguments used; and the absence of any allusion to the authority of the founder of the sect must appear remarkable.

A great part of Paul's speeches and writings is occupied with the Gentile controversy; yet here is the same apparent unconsciousness of any sayings of Christ himself bearing upon the subject. He quotes copiously from the prophets to prove that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek:—since his Jewish readers believed also in Jesus, why omit all reference to his prediction, that many from the east and west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or others equally to the point? It is to be observed, also, that Luke represents Paul's mission to the Gentiles, not as undertaken in conformity with the teaching of Jesus during his natural life, but as the object of a special revelation to Paul himself. Acts xxvi. 16, 17.

Thus arises a strong probability that Jesus himself had not arrived fully at those enlarged notions of the universality of his kingdom, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, which appear so frequently in the four Gospels. Yet the mere title, "King of the Jews," could not express the whole of his ideas concerning the kingdom of God. They were such, probably, as a patriotic Jew might have formed from the prophets. The Son of Man, or Messiah, was to restore the throne of David, and to reign at Jerusalem; all nations were to recognize the supremacy of the people of God, and to be converted to righteousness by the laws proceeding from Zion. Isaiah



xlii. 1—4: "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." 21: "The Lord will magnify the law, and make it honourable." lx. 3: "The Gentiles shall come to thy (Zion's) light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Jer. iii. 17: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." Thus, in the views of Jesus, there was probably a large mixture of what was merely local and national, which disappeared in later times. The decay of the Jewish state, and the spread of the Gospel through many lands, led men to dwell upon and enlarge those parts of the Messiah's character and offices which were of universal interest. Jerusalem destroyed, made way for a new Jerusalem, the metropolis of all the faithful, to descend from heaven; the Messiah, instead of reigning in an earthly city, was to appear seated on the clouds of heaven; the tribes of the earth, instead of coming to bend before mount Zion, were to look for the revelation of the Son of Man from on high; and the king of Israel was forgotten in the Judge of mankind.

IV. Jesus was a moral and religious teacher. A moral and religious teacher.  
 This was part of the office of prophet, which he assumed; and was essential to his main purpose of preaching the kingdom of God. The peculiar Jewish notion that national righteousness must introduce the kingdom permitted the unusual combination, that one who suffered death as a revolutionist should be regarded as pre-eminently a moral teacher.

It is not unfrequently allowed that, in the present age, the moral teaching of Jesus forms the strength of Christianity. The advocates of its divine origin, from a conviction of the sufficiency of historical evidence, are probably few in comparison with those who feel impressed with the divine authority of Jesus, by the weight, the beauty, and the apparent originality of his discourses and parables.\* In the teacher presented to us in the four Gospels, an inexhaustible invention, sententiousness combined with copiousness, affability with dignity, and the whole elevated by the continual reference to a great object—the preparation for the kingdom of God—all this seems to justify the description, “never man spake like this man.” Yet considering the sublime character which mere human genius sometimes assumes when influenced by the higher feelings, it appears unnecessary to have recourse to the hypothesis of an extraordinary divine inspiration to account for any of the discourses or doctrines of Jesus. The belief in his own appointment as a prophet and Messiah to his nation would give an air of elevation to the manner in which his precepts were delivered, of the same kind as the actual appointment might be expected to give; and the precepts themselves can hardly be considered as *more* than what a favourably endowed mind might have drawn from its own resources, and from such materials as we know to have been within the reach of Jesus.

The greater part of the precepts in the four Gospels are to be found in different parts of the Old Testament, in the book of Ecclesiasticus, and in the ancient Rabbinical writings.† Although it cannot be proved that Jesus borrowed

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\* These remarks apply chiefly to the first three Gospels. Reasons have been given for considering the last as representing less faithfully the real character of the teaching of Jesus.

† See next chapter.

directly from all these sources, it thus appears that the precepts referred to might have been familiar to many of the Jews in his time. The singular fortunes of this nation had given rise to some striking peculiarities in its modes of thinking on moral and religious subjects; and it may perhaps be shown, that much of that which distinguishes Christianity from other systems flowed from a state of thought neither uncommon nor unnatural in the nation from the bosom of which the new religion sprung.

The science of morals having for its basis the constitution of human nature, teachers of it in different ages must necessarily have much agreement with each other. The distinctive character of each moralist is chiefly discernible in the *selection* of the duties on which he lays the greatest stress, and the *grounds* on which he rests moral obligation. In this view, the peculiarities which cause the doctrines of Jesus to stand apart from other systems appear to be principally the four following:—

Firstly. The devotional spirit. This is the most striking feature in Christianity. There is a continual reference to the Supreme Being. The will of God is made the basis of all duty. Men are to imitate their father in heaven. Jesus himself retires frequently into the desert to pray, and declares that his meat is to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work.

This spirit was a prominent characteristic of the Jewish nation. Their form of government, and the vicissitudes to which the nation had been exposed, combining, perhaps, with an inherent disposition, had caused the religious feeling, which is common in different degrees to all mankind, to be manifested among the Jews with a depth and constancy which rendered it their most striking national feature. The belief in one supreme invisible God, held by their remote

forefathers, had been incorporated by Moses into their system of national law.\* This belief, although not unknown to many nations, was by the Jews alone consolidated into an established religion. The conflicts which it had undergone with polytheism in the time of the kings of Israel and Judah, and more lately during the ascendancy of the Macedonian kings of Syria, had ended in its triumph. The laws of Moses, which at intervals had fallen into disuse from the introduction of foreign ideas and usages, were revived successively by Ezra and Judas Maccabæus. In consequence of the reformation effected by the latter, Judaism was not only firmly established in its native land, but began to make progress among the Greeks; and the inferiority of Jewish political strength was in some degree compensated by the increasing conquests of the Jewish religion. To pure monotheism the prophets added, that their nation was the chosen people of God, his servant appointed to make him known among the nations; and consequently, that the Ruler of the universe was constantly watching over the affairs of Israel, arranging events for his special benefit, and guiding him as a favourite child. The Jew who neglected the Deity felt himself guilty not only of impiety, but of treason and ingratitude towards the King and Father of his nation. Monotheism in Judea had therefore, in addition to its own inherent strength of sublimity and rationality, the support of patriotism and national feeling.

Hence the remarkable prevalence of the religious tone observable in all the ancient Jewish books. The historian passes over secondary causes, and relates events as of the

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\* In "Bauer's Theology of the Ancient Hebrews," it is held to be probable that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was no more than a family-God, who by Moses was raised into a national-God; and that the purer monotheistic ideas interwoven in the Pentateuch proceed from a later age, that of David or later. English Translation, p. 2—42.



Lord's doing; he omits all reference to human motives, and tells us that his personages act as the Lord had put it into their hearts. The poet's compositions are chiefly hymns of praise. Public teachers proclaim that they come from the Divine presence, and speak as the Lord said unto them. And the nation entitles the expected restoration of Israel, The Kingdom of God.

The superintendence of the Deity, which was coldly or occasionally recognized in other nations as a speculative truth, was thus among the Jews a theme of constant and impassioned feeling. As such it appears also in the Gospel. But Jesus does not merely echo the prophets, and present to us incessantly the Lord of Hosts, and the God of Jacob; he renders more prominent the paternal character of the Deity, and exhibits it in a form more calculated to attract and interest all men. He appears to direct his followers, by their title as human beings, rather than as members of the chosen nation, to approach the Father in heaven. Each individual in any nation might consequently appropriate to himself a share in the paternal regards of the Deity, and the close relationship, which had hitherto subsisted between Israel and his God, was by Christianity thrown open to all mankind.

Secondly. The doctrine of a future state. This doctrine had gradually gained ground among the Jews from the date of the captivity, and in the time of Jesus was held by the whole nation excepting the Sadducees. Jesus, therefore, does not lay down this doctrine as peculiar to himself. Although it had naturally a large share in his last discourses to his followers, he appears to introduce it only as the occasion requires, and as a doctrine well known to those whom he addressed. It certainly does not appear to be preached by Jesus in that urgent and pointed manner which we should expect from one who considered that the chief end of his

mission was to bring immortality to light. Whence, then, has this doctrine come to be regarded as eminently distinctive of Christianity?

Jesus considered his principal object to be the preaching of the kingdom of God, which, it has been seen, was generally supposed to signify the restoration and enlargement of the throne of Israel. The expectation of this kingdom continued in the church after his death; but its fulfilment in the sense originally contemplated being continually postponed, and becoming daily more improbable, it was gradually replaced by the more generally understood doctrine of a future judgment. The transition was not unnatural, since the idea of the Messiah, as an universal and righteous king, might easily be modified into that of Judge of mankind. After the fall of Jerusalem, when it was seen that still the kingdom of God was not nigh, that the Son of Man did not appear on the clouds of heaven, and that the generation which had beheld him was passing away, and yet these things were not fulfilled;—the later interpretation of the promises of Jesus was confirmed, the throne of Israel was forgotten, and the kingdom understood only of the house eternal in the heavens.

The latter was the sense usually given to the kingdom by Paul the preacher to the Gentiles. The first three Gospels, written near the time of the fall of Jerusalem, appear to preserve the original Jewish notion mixed with later interpretations; but in the last Gospel few traces of the Messiah's earthly kingdom are to be found, and the promises of Jesus are made to refer clearly to the state of the righteous in heaven.

Thus, by means of the undertaking of Jesus, a deep-rooted national superstition was made to lend its force to the spread of the doctrine of a future state. The vigorous impulse contributed to launch this doctrine amongst the nations

to whom Christianity reached, where its own power, combined with other causes, maintained it in health and increase after this temporary support had died away.

Thirdly. The enforcement of the virtues of humility and resignation. Precepts of this kind, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God,"—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake,"—"Come unto me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,"—"But I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;"—these are uncommon, and form a conspicuous feature in Christianity. The spirit which they inculcate has seldom been dwelt upon as a subject of commendation in other schools. The stoic pretended that pain and pleasure were alike indifferent to the wise man; Jesus acknowledges pain and insult to be evil, but teaches that they are to be encountered willingly for righteousness' sake. The stoic martyr was supported by pride; Jesus commends lowliness of heart. Whilst it is generally allowed that, amidst the clashing of human interests, a certain degree of uncomplaining endurance and of cheerful acquiescence under wrong, on the part of individuals, is eminently conducive to the good of society,—such a temper, in its actual manifestation, is so frequently ridiculed and despised, that the fine moral perception of a teacher, who could single it out for especial praise, has been justly made a matter of admiration. The more conspicuous virtues of courage, generosity, and the like, have found numberless panegyrists; but Jesus chiefly has unveiled the virtues which dignify adversity, and taught men to admire suffering worth.

Yet here also it is impossible to ascribe originality to Jesus. The lowly spirit, which he commends, is also enjoined in terms of nearly equal force in the Old Testament and in the Rabbinical writings. These commendations are

indeed so frequent, that the temper in question may be regarded as another peculiar feature in the Jewish character. Its prevalence may be accounted for by the joint influence of their religious creed, and the circumstances of the nation from the time of the Assyrian invasions.

The supposed perpetual superintendence of the Supreme Being, which was so constantly impressed on the mind of the Jew, must necessarily dispose it to humility and resignation. The habitual contemplation of the Divine perfections, in contrast with the worshipper's own nature, must naturally produce the language, and frequently the spirit, of self-abasement.

But another important cause of the prevalence of this tone among the Jews might be found, probably, in the precarious and usually oppressed state of their nation during eight centuries. The reign of Josiah beheld the departing reflection of the glories of David and Solomon; and Jacob, successively the slave of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, obtained too short intervals of independent national existence ever to recover fully the bold and martial spirit of the conquerors of Canaan, or of the mighty men of David. The Jew who wept by the waters of Babylon could no longer repeat the songs of Miriam and Deborah; and the continual sight of the holy city in ruins, or in diminished glory, rendered the tone of Jeremiah for many centuries the more appropriate expression of the nation's feelings. Checked in his first attempts after increase and fame, the despised Israel learned to cultivate and appreciate the virtues of an humble spirit.

It is curious to observe that the human race appears sometimes to learn on a large scale, by the same kind of lessons as those which carry on the education of individuals. By means of Jesus, the spirit which had resulted from his nation's misfortunes has been recommended to the world at large; and thus, in the same way as adversity completes



individual character, will the afflictions of the Jewish nation have contributed to the moral perfection of mankind.

Fourthly. Another peculiarity of the doctrine of Jesus is its unlimited benevolence. "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

This is not equalled in the Old Testament. The Law contains many beautiful precepts concerning forgiveness: the Israelite is forbidden to bear any grudge against the children of his people, and is commanded to help his enemy's ass lying under its burthen; but Moses spoke as the judicious magistrate, intent on promoting concord among the people immediately under his care, rather than as an universal philanthropist. The book of Proverbs forbids us to rejoice when an enemy falleth, lest the Lord turn away his wrath from him. In the Psalms and Prophets, forgiveness is far from being the prevalent tone with respect to enemies; imprecations are mingled with prayers, and the day of the Lord's vengeance is looked forward to with exultation. It seems necessary, therefore, to seek for the cause of the superior tone of the Christian benevolence in the individual character of Jesus. He enjoins love to all mankind. His commands betoken the generous spirit which does good from its own impulse, and, with a noble carelessness, takes no record of injuries, because resentment and malice are beneath its nature.

The motives recognized by Jesus appear to be twofold ;— the desire of attaining the highest moral perfection, and the hope of securing the favour of the Deity. “ Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect :” and “ Your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest.” That this reward was to consist only in the pleasures springing from the exercise of the virtuous affections, few of the Jews would have been prepared to admit. Temporal prosperity had been promised in the law ; the Pharisees and Essenes looked for undefined enjoyments in a future life ; and this latter expectation was clearly held out by Jesus as the chief incentive to virtue. “ Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”

Upon the whole, the moral teaching of Jesus was such a combination as might be expected from a vigorous mind, fully conversant with the notions of his age and country, but yet able to modify or add to them from its own resources. He borrowed largely, but with the air of one who condescends to use some materials which he finds already prepared, rather than as one mistrusting his own power. Such precepts as these, “ The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath ;” “ On these two commandments (love to God and love to man) hang all the law and the prophets ;” “ Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you, for this is the law and the prophets ;” “ These (moral duties) ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others (ritual observances) undone ;” the parable of the good Samaritan, in answer to the question, Who is my neighbour ?—precepts like these show that the mind of Jesus was of that kind which finds a more appropriate office in laying down great principles, than in merely expounding them. He set aside even the authority of Moses, when the doctrine of the law-giver appeared to interfere with his own. “ Moses said this

on account of the hardness of your hearts, but from the beginning it was not so." He spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. The forms of logical disputation were beneath the attention of one claiming a mission from heaven; hence there is very little appearance of reasoning in his discourses, and in Jesus we seem to listen to an oracle, and not to a philosopher.

V. The four Gospels present Jesus to us chiefly Personal  
character. as the Messiah. What he said and did in the short interval during which he bore this character was alone likely to be preserved through the traditions of nearly half a century. The writers probably knew, or could learn, but little of his history before the commencement of his preaching, that is, for the greater part of his life. The predominant interest belonging to his public career absorbed the attention of his cotemporaries; and so little pains had they taken to obtain or record information concerning his earlier history, that, after the lapse of about forty years from his death, an industrious compiler, apparently intent upon collecting all relating to Jesus that he thought worthy of belief, and so well disposed to carry back his biography to an early date, that he begins with the birth of John the Baptist, was only able to record a few traditions evidently containing much fable\* concerning his birth and infancy, and could find nothing to relieve the blank of about eighteen years from the time when the child Jesus disputed in the temple to the

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\* Zacharias is struck dumb for doubting the words of the angel Gabriel. This angel gives directions that the children shall be called, the one John, and the other Jesus, both of which were amongst the most common Jewish names. The speeches are little else than predictions of the future glory of the child Jesus. Anna speaks of him to all them that look for redemption in Jerusalem. It is revealed to Simeon that Jesus is the Lord's Christ. Yet no recollection of all this appears thirty years afterwards amongst his own family, who did not believe in him.

appearance of the Baptist. What was beyond the reach of Luke must remain inaccessible to later investigation; and we should seek in vain to satisfy our curiosity concerning the pursuits and demeanour of Jesus as the private citizen of Nazareth.\*

This very poverty of information on the part of so many as four writers, does, however, seem to authorize the conjecture that there was nothing remarkable to be told. Jesus probably attracted but little attention from his fellow-citizens previously to his public preaching. The contemplation of objects above the common pursuits of life frequently produces an indifference towards and inaptitude for them, which in the eyes of most observers, and in many cases justly, place the recluse below rather than above the level of his fellow-men. The active but petty engagements which would confer weight in a provincial town, were probably little sought after by one who was meditating on the prophets; and the respectable Nazarenes who filled the important offices of priest, ruler of the synagogue, or tax-gatherer, might have smiled with contempt if told that their names would be eclipsed by that of the low-born, obscure, and apparently useless citizen, who, disregarding civil eminence, was engaged in the contemplation of the kingdom of God.

The few allusions which are found to the earlier life of Jesus do not indicate that he had been considered as a person of influence or weight in his own town. His townsmen distinguish him merely by his profession and the name

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\* It is said in the Talmud that Jesus had been in Egypt when a young man in company with Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah, with whom having disagreed, he gave himself up to magical practices.—*Bab. Sanhed.*, fol. 107, 2.

The continual resort of the Jews to Alexandria, and the opening part of Matthew's Gospel, seem to entitle this story to some credit, as far as relates to the journey of Jesus into Egypt at some period of his life.



of his family. Mark vi. 1, 4: "He came to his own country, and his disciples follow him: and when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue; and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things; and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." See also Luke iv. 24; John vi. 42; Matt. xiii. 54.

His own family seem at first not only to have disbelieved the reality of his miracles, but to have looked upon his proceedings as rash and senseless. Mark iii. 21, 22: "And when his friends heard of it (the assemblage of the multitude), they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself. And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." John also relates a conversation in which the brethren of Jesus speak of his undertaking in a depreciating manner. vii. 3, 5.

Thus it would appear that there had been nothing in the conduct of Jesus to prepare common observers for his notoriety, and that those who were most intimate with him, regarded his undertaking with surprise and impatience. How, then, did he acquire the command of that deep reverence and that implicit obedience which seem to have been yielded to him by his disciples?—By the dazzling nature of his pretensions, the force of character with which he supported them, and his attractive social qualities.

The claim of a divine mission, and the pretension to mi-

raculous powers, generally call forth either contempt or admiration. The idea of command over invisible influences is so calculated both to delight and to overawe, that, if the claimant be able to maintain his hazardous pretensions with any apparent success, or merely to bring the minds of beholders into secret doubt, his influence becomes of the most despotic kind. The enthusiasm of Jesus was not of that blind sort which precludes all regard to common probabilities. His belief in miracles was not the chimera of a disordered imagination, but was founded on ideas common to his age and country; it permitted, therefore, the exercise of intellectual vigour and acuteness in the situations into which such a belief led him. He possessed in a remarkable degree both the boldness and the tact which are necessary to every leader of a multitude, and especially to one who sustains the character of a miracle-worker. His answers to the applicants are generally such as would not compromise his reputation, whatever were the result:—"According to thy faith be it unto thee;" "Go thy way, thy faith has saved thee," &c. When the disciples whom he had authorized to cast out demons asked him why they could not cure a certain lunatic, his ready answer was, "Because of your unbelief," and "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." When pressed by his opponents to produce a sign from heaven, he referred to "the sign of the times," and, by a prompt and sharp reproof, made his questioners appear the baffled party. When his disciples begged permission to call down fire from heaven to destroy the uncourteous village, he answered, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village." On another occasion, when called upon for a miracle, he promised at once to build the Temple in three days, requiring first that it

should be destroyed. His retort concerning the authority of John, and his reply concerning the tribute money, show the same mixture of intrepidity and tact, which could always silence, although it might be dangerous or impossible to answer, an opponent.

The degree of management or shrewdness here supposed does not imply that Jesus was a wilful deceiver, or insincere in his main purpose and pretensions. From his apparent success in the cases of demons and others, he might believe that he really possessed a miraculous power; but he was obliged to perceive that it was not invariable or universal. In his own mind he might conclude that miracles of different magnitudes required different modes of preparation, or a different degree of faith; or he might be unable to explain the matter at all to his own satisfaction. But in the meantime, he would naturally wish to avoid a display of failure before his followers and the multitude, and, in the midst of incidental embarrassing conjunctures, would avail himself of his promptness of thought to find suitable evasions.\*

But the assertion of a divine commission, and the skilful maintenance of miraculous pretensions, did not constitute the only hold of Jesus upon the allegiance of his followers. This was secured by the interest which he was able to excite as a man and a friend. The Messiah was equally revered as a leader, and loved as a companion. His tales, discourses, and ingenious adaptations of passing incidents, imparted higher charms to a life of adventure, and were more powerful than the direct command to follow him. He possessed in a

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\* I cannot find, in any of the miracles, reason to suspect that Jesus was concerned in a fraudulent scheme or contrivance. This low kind of art would render his character inexplicable; and the supposition of it is unnecessary, since it has been shown that those miracles which cannot be resolved into natural events probably owe their miraculous part to the exaggeration or invention of the narrators.

high degree that facility or accessibleness which inspires confidence, whilst it does not diminish respect. The disciples as well as the Pharisees invited him without fear to their feasts. The copiousness and weight of his conversation, and the interest which his presence alone must inspire by raising the minds of his associates to the contemplation of the elevated objects with which his name was connected, may explain the feeling of those who said, "Lord, we will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." The promptness of his rebukes even probably strengthened rather than weakened the attachment of his hearers, since they were delivered with that frankness of speech which allows men to feel less hurt by the severity of the reproof, than interested by the point with which it is delivered, and conciliated by the evident absence of malignant intention.

The modern admirers of Jesus, who can enter but slightly into Jewish interests in the time of Tiberius, might doubtless prefer to regard him in his character of moral instructor alone, and to separate the teacher on the Mount from the leader of ignorant Galilean multitudes, assuming David's titles and clearing the temple to the shouts of the populace. But it has been seen that a lofty and poetical enthusiasm, a religious patriotism promoted by the national literature, more than the ordinary motives of the demagogue, probably impelled Jesus into those parts of his career which most embarrass his panegyrists. His enterprize in the main was one which must excite sympathy;—to prepare men for freedom and regeneration by means of general reformation: and if he mingled with it secret hopes of a speedy expulsion of foreign tyrants, the lovers of mankind will lament his insufficient means rather than condemn the wish.

It might be an extreme, however, to assert that Jesus was entirely devoid of those powerful ordinary stimulants, ambi-



tion and the love of distinction and sway. Religious humility is not equivalent to practical lowliness of spirit. The proudest kings and priests have used language equally submissive towards God, and haughty towards man; and David's son, if he had reached David's throne, might have been, like his supposed progenitor, no less exacting of homage to himself than punctilious in rendering it to the King of heaven. The question, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" was intended not only to gain information, but to elicit the confession on which the meek and lowly prophet bestowed such emphatic commendation, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He waived his own title to be called Good, and the right of bestowing seats in his kingdom; but it was in favour of God himself. He denounced by a parable heavy judgments on those who would not have him to reign over them; and it appears probable that the constant opposition of the Pharisees added vehemence to the reproofs which their hypocrisy merited.\* Whilst recommending humility to his followers, he never ceased himself to exercise most absolute sway over them. The authority which mental ascendancy justly procures, he was inclined in the fullest degree to maintain: "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am." "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matt. xxiii. 8. He retires before superior physical force; but in no instance does he succumb in pretensions or bearing to tetrarch, priest, scribe, or pharisee. Indignation and anger are frequently displayed by him when his mission is opposed. Adversaries of the kingdom are unsparingly condemned to the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of

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\* Matthew places the woes on the Pharisees shortly after they had succeeded in repressing the enthusiasm of the populace at Jerusalem.

teeth. The ready recurrence to "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched," betokens the traces which a Jewish education,—the habit of dividing men into the Lord's people and the Lord's enemies,—might easily leave even on a mind possessing naturally much pure benevolence. "Go ye and tell that fox," breathes rather a spirited defiance than the passionless resignation with which Aristides submitted to exile. "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath," and "a greater than Solomon is here," show a determination to assert the full dignity of the Messiah at the risk of shocking even the religious prejudices of his hearers. It is singular that even two tales bearing strongly the legendary character, record somewhat harsh assertions of his prophetic dignity to his parents. Adversity brings out the more amiable features of the character: as Jesus met with disappointment and suffering, the more pleasing characteristics which he so largely possessed, sympathy with men's wants, consideration for their weaknesses, patience and fortitude amidst distresses, now form the traits by which he is most easily recognized. Yet after making all allowance for the tone of command and indignation which his assumed office and the conscious dignity of his character must frequently warrant, we seem to meet with indications that the Son of Man was formed like his brethren in this point also, that he might have felt some of the usual influence of power and success. The qualities which form a poet or a prophet are not those which make a firm and judicious temporal ruler; Jesus in suffering, and Jesus in triumph, might have given different lessons to mankind: and if our chief interest be to preserve an attractive moral picture, we may perhaps feel inclined to rejoice that the tempter was never really permitted to expose Jesus to this most severe ordeal; that an untimely fate, in the world's sense, preserved him from being lost in a

common crowd of kings and conquerors; and that his kingdom remained that imaginary one, in which he was to be revealed on the clouds of heaven, or, as his followers learned afterwards to express the dominion of his life and lessons, a kingdom not of this world.\*

Whether the hard circumstances in which he was placed contributed or not to preserve the purity of his character, it is indisputable that the pleasing features do strongly predominate. Upon the whole, we see in Jesus the singular example of a great and noble mind influenced by a kind of notions, which, when acting upon more ordinary men, produce mere visionaries or fanatics. The belief in divine missions, and the expectation of approaching miraculous revolutions, are not uncommon; but in most states of society they are found in conjunction with ignorance and a low degree of moral and intellectual power. A peculiar creed, literature, and national position, permitted these notions to be seized upon by a highly endowed mind; and that which, in connexion with coarseness and violence, would have produced a savage and warlike fanatic, falling in with intellect, benevolence, and natural refinement, produced a benign and philosophic enthusiast.

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\* There have been three most distinguished regenerators in the Hebrew nation, Moses, Judas Maccabæus, and Jesus. Judas was the most successful in a military and political sense; yet he is the least remembered. Jesus failed completely in this sense; yet fame is too low a term to apply to him. A poor encouragement to the more vulgar conquerors who have not the assistance of legislative and philosophic merit, or of a noble cause, to sanctify their claims to fame! Already the leading of men into any new domains of mind and heart is the enterprize which excites most interest. Is it not probable that in future centuries, far less interest will be felt by the majority of mankind in the histories of Alexander, Timour the Tartar, and Napoleon, than in those of George Fox, Wesley, St. Simon, or Owen? The question in reference to Julius Cæsar and Jesus Christ would have sounded more startling to Tacitus. The master of the Roman world himself would not easily have believed that his own date would come to be computed according to the æra of a Jewish peasant.

The scantiness and mixed nature of the four Gospels only permit us, after all, to gain a view far from perfect of the real character of Jesus. They relate chiefly to the short period of his public appearance; the discourses introduced are made the vehicles for conveying the writers' thoughts on the controversies and events of their own times; and the narratives are loaded with those miraculous additions which, in the opinion of the authors, were calculated to do honour to the founder of their church. Few readers will be disposed to the labour of making the deductions and allowances required on these several accounts as they proceed in the perusal of the Gospels. All but the few whose taste lies in an obscure and usually uninteresting kind of investigation, will prefer one or other of the more decided courses,—of taking the books as full warrant for the truth of all that they contain, or of neglecting their study entirely. Hence, as no other account of Christ of equal authority is likely ever to appear, the view taken of him must probably continue to be partially erroneous. By the world in general, Jesus must continue to be regarded as the Christ of the four Gospels, i.e., a combination of the individual Jesus with the thoughts and feelings of the Christian Church after the fall of Jerusalem. Nor will the historical inaccuracy of such a view appear to any but critics important. The progress of thought amongst bodies of men presents matter of interest equally with the view of individual minds; and we can excuse those interpolations and fictions, which, whilst they render more confused the aspect of the founder of the sect, present us with a view of that developed state to which his doctrines had arrived after an interesting and eventful interval.

Enough is seen of Christ to leave the impression of a real and strongly marked character; and the dimness, which is left around it, permits the exercise of the imagination in a



manner both pleasing and useful. The indistinctness of the image allows it to become the gathering centre for all those highly exalted ideas of excellence which a more closely defined delineation might have prevented from resting upon it. To the superhuman powers attributed to him by his early followers, later admirers are at liberty to add all the qualities of mind and character which can delight and attract in a human being. To awaken men to the perception of moral beauty is the first step towards enabling them to attain it. But the contemplation of abstract qualities is difficult; some real or fictitious form is involuntarily sought as a substratum for the excellence which the moralist holds to view. Whilst no human character in the history of the world can be brought to mind, which, in proportion as it could be closely examined, did not present some defects disqualifying it for being the emblem of moral perfection, we can rest with least check, or sense of incongruity, on the imperfectly known character of Jesus of Nazareth. If a representative be sought of human virtue, enough is still seen of his benevolent doctrine, attractive character, and elevated designs, to direct our eyes to the Prophet and Martyr of Galilee.

## CHAPTER XVII.

COMPARISON OF THE PRECEPTS OF JESUS WITH THE  
JEWISH WRITINGS.

THE Jewish writings quoted for this purpose will be the Scriptures of the Old Testament; the book of Ecclesiasticus by Jesus the son of Sirach, written about 200 years before Christ; and the most ancient Rabbinical writings,\* viz. :

The *Talmud*, which consists of two parts, the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*. The *Mishna*, or first Talmud, is a collection of Pharisaic traditions made by Rabbi Jehuda Hakkadosh, A. D. 141,† or, as some say, towards the close of the second century. The *Gemara*, or second part of the Talmud, consists of commentaries upon and additions to the *Mishna*, collected by Rabbi Jochanan ben Eliezer; and this addition completed the Jerusalem Talmud, A. D. 469. A similar collection was made at Babylon at the beginning of the sixth century, and called the Babylonian Talmud.

The book *Sohar*, or the Brightness, containing mystical interpretations of the Old Testament, chiefly those of R. Simeon ben Jochai, whose disciples made this compilation about A. D. 170.

The *Midraschic* books, containing collections of traditions, doctrines, and stories, derived from the schools of interpretation.‡ These collections were made by some Rabbins, whose

\* The quotations which follow, from the Rabbinical writings, are chiefly selections from the copious works of Schoettgen on this subject, *Horæ Hebraicæ*, and *Jesus Verus Messias*.

† Lindo's Jewish Calendar.

‡ After the Babylonish captivity the Jews founded a house of interpreta-

names are unknown, about the time of Christ, and during the first, second, third, and fourth centuries. The names of the books are, *Tanchuma*, *Rabboth*, *Pirke R. Eliezer*, *Mechilta*, *Siphra*, *Siphre*, *Pesikta Rabbetha*, *Pesikta Sotarta*, *Midrasch Schmuel*, *Tehillim*, and *Mischle*.

Since all these Rabbinical books were compiled *after* the time of Christ, it appears at first sight that no quotations from them can affect the question of the originality of the precepts of the Gospels. But it is unquestionable, that although the *compilations* are of these late dates, the sayings and traditions which they contain were much earlier ; and there are strong reasons for believing that they originated either before the time of Christ, or independently of any connexion with the writers of the New Testament. This point is considered at great length by Schoettgen, some of whose arguments I abridge below.\* They appear sufficient to establish it as a general truth, that

tions, in which the Rabbis and their disciples assembled daily for the purpose of explaining the Scriptures. It is possible that the institution existed before the captivity, but there are no clear traces of it. The Rabbis sat on the higher seats; the disciples on lower ones at their feet. The remaining space was occupied by the people or any persons who chose to come in to listen. The chief schools of this kind were at Tiberias, Cesarea, Lydda, Zippore, and Jafna.—*Schoettgen. de Rabbim. Lectione ; Lightfoot, Centuria Chorographica*, lib. i.

\* The remaining books (besides the Mishna and Sohar) are more recent : yet they contain the words and doctrines of the most ancient Rabbis, who lived either before or about the time of Christ. The method of teaching then in use amongst the Jews was calculated to preserve not only the doctrines, but the very words, of their masters. They were so scrupulous on this point, that in Sohar, Exod. fol. 36, he who alters the words of the law, or of a Rabbin, is threatened with exclusion from heaven. The exercise of the memory thus held such an important part in the education of the Pharisaic Jews, and their understandings were so buried beneath a heap of doctrines, that they made but a poor figure in matters requiring the free use of the judgment.

If any one allege that the more recent Rabbins may have borrowed from the New Testament, I will not dispute on this point ; but that the older ones, quoted in the Talmud and the Midraschim, had read the New Testament, and borrowed many things from it in order to impose upon the

it is extremely improbable that the ancient Rabbins borrowed from the New Testament; consequently, although the want of an exact Rabbinical chronology must prevent our laying much stress on particular coincidences, the close resemblance of a large proportion of the Gospel precepts to many of those found in these books, leads us to infer that such precepts were not unknown to the Jews in the time of Christ, and might have proceeded very naturally from one assuming at that time the office of public instructor.

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Matt. v. 3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

Prov. xv. 32: "Before honour is *humility*."

xvi. 19: "Better to be of an *humble spirit* with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud."

xxix. 23: "A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

Micah vi. 8: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk *humbly* with thy God?"

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Christians, appears very improbable for many reasons: 1. They hated the Gentiles and their religion so much, that they did not consider their books worth reading, fearing also lest they should be seduced by them from their own faith. 2. The Jews were too inferior to the Christians in critical and philological skill to attempt such plagiarism. 3. The Jews of the first centuries could not foresee that Drusius, Lightfoot, and other critics, would in the course of time explore their writings, and collate them with the New Testament. 4. They themselves allow that the Gemara is written in such an obscure manner, that they never expected that the Christians could penetrate into its mysteries. 5. The books of the Talmud and the others contain those same errors and faults of the Pharisees which Christ reprehended. If, then, the writers had read these things in the New Testament, it is hardly credible that they would have inserted them in their writings, and thereby have afforded a testimony to the truth of the words of Christ.

Moreover, there occur subjects and opinions peculiar to the ancient Jewish Church before and during the time of Christ. It appears, then, that Christ



Pirke Aboth. c. iv. 4: "Rabbi Levites Jafnensis said, Let it be thy chief desire to be of an *humble spirit*, for the hopes of man are as a worm."

Sanhedrin,\* fol. 43, 2: "R. Jehuda ben Levi said, Whilst the temple stood, if any man offered a holocaust, he obtained the reward of a holocaust; if an oblation, he obtained the reward due to an oblation. But if a man be of an *humble spirit*, the Scripture considers him as having offered all sacrifices."

Tanchuma, fol. 84, 4: "The law is not with those of a large spirit, but with him whose *mind is contrite*."

Matt. v. 4: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Psalms cxlvii. 3: "He healeth the *broken in heart*, and bindeth up their wounds."

Isaiah lxi. 1—3: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the *meek*, to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning."

Ver. 5: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Psalms xxxvii. 11: "But the *meek shall inherit* the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

and his apostles did not entirely reject the good things which they found amongst the Jews, but used them felicitously against the Pharisaic abuses, thus slaying their adversaries with their own weapons, in which proceeding the wisdom of Christ is not sufficiently recognized by those ignorant of this kind of learning.—*Schoettgen. de Lectione Rabbiorum.*

The 3rd and 4th reasons are intended to meet the strained objection that the Rabbins might have borrowed from the New Testament with a view to mislead the Christians as to the originality of the precepts. That these precepts were borrowed on account of their merit is a more simple and obvious objection. But the other arguments are strongly against it: the temper shown by the Jews, as related in the Acts, and for some centuries later, leaves little doubt that the origination of a precept by the Nazarenes would have been a strong reason for rejecting it. But on the other hand the Christians were eager to quote Jewish authorities.

\* One of the sixty-one Tracts of the Mishna.

Matt. v. 6 : "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Isaiah lviii. 10, 11 : "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, . . . the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and a spring of water whose waters fail not."

Ver. 7 : "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Schabbath, fol. 151, 2 : (tract of the Mishna) "Whosoever hath *mercy* on men, on him also God hath mercy. But he who sheweth no mercy to men, neither to him will God shew mercy."

Ver. 8 : "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Psalm xxiv. 3, 4 : "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a *pure heart*."

Isaiah xxxiii. 15, 16 : "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly . . . he shall dwell on high."

Philo de Essæis : "They have attained the highest holiness in the worship of God, not by sacrificing animals, but by cultivating *purity of heart*."

Ver. 10 : "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

Synopsis Sohar, p. 92 : "It is pleasing to the righteous to *suffer afflictions on account of God*, for thus are they freed from this state of exile."

Ver. 14 : "Ye are the light of the world."

Aboth R. Nathan, c. 24 : "When Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai\* was near death, he wept loudly. His disciples said to him, Rabbi, thou high pillar, *light of the world*, weighty hammer, why dost thou weep?"

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\* He presided at Jafna soon after the fall of Jerusalem.

Matt. v. 16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Prov. iv. 18: "But the path of the just is as *the shining light*, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Mechilta, fol. 27, 2: "Simeon ben Eliezer said, When the Israelites do the will of God, then his name is *glorified* in the world."

Ver. 18: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Schir haschirim rabba, fol. 26, 1: "R. Alexander said, Although all men in the world should gather together to whiten one plume of the raven, they could not effect it. So, although all men should assemble to abolish *Jod*, which is the least letter in the law, they could not succeed."

Ver. 22: "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Sohar, Exod. fol. 50, col. 299: "R. Chiskias said, Whosoever calleth his neighbour *resho*, wicked, he is thrust into hell (Gehenna)."

Ver. 24: "First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Berachoth, fol. 23, 1 (tr. Mishna): "Be not as the fools, who sin, and offer a sacrifice, but yet do not the works of repentance."

Ver. 25: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest," &c.

Sohar chadasch, fol. 22, 2: "R. Tanchum said, Come and see. How much ought a man to beware of sins, whilst the *ways* to repentance are yet *open to him*, before the way be closed!"

Ver. 28: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Sepher Rasiel haggadol, fol. 9, 2: "If, therefore, thou

restrainest thy soul, and *lookest not* on women, thy reward shall be double."

Bammidbar rabba, sect. 9, fol. 203, 3, and Tanchuma, fol. 61, 2: "Our Rabbins said, If a woman, whilst she is with her husband, *directs her heart* to some one else whom she hath seen in the street, there is no greater adultery."

Matt. v. 29: "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Targum Hierosol. Genes. xxxviii. 26, in Jalkut Rubeni, fol. 65, 1: "Judah speaks thus, It is better for me that I should be burned in this world with a little fire, than that I should be burned in the world to come with the devouring flame."

Ver. 34, 37: "I say unto you, Swear not at all, . . . let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil."

Philo de Essæis: "They lead a life of continued purity, unstained by *oaths* and falsehoods."

Josephus de Ess.: "Whatsoever they say also is firmer than an oath; but *swearing is avoided* by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury; for they say that he who cannot be believed without swearing by God, is already condemned."

Bammidbar rabba, sect. 22: "God said to the Israelites, Think not that ye are allowed to *swear by my name*, even though ye swear rightly."

Midrasch ruth rabba, sect. fol. 42, 4: "R. Huna said in the name of R. Samuel ben Isaac, The *yea* of the righteous is *yea*, and their *no* is *no*."

Ver. 36: "Thou canst not make one hair white or black."

Sepher Rasiel Haggadol, fol. 10, 2: "In the days of thy youth, who hath made thy hair black? If thou shouldst wash it with all kinds of nitre and borith, thou *canst not*



*make one hair black, nor canst thou whiten one hair; and yet in thy old age all thy hairs become white."*

Matt. v. 38, 39: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil."

Prov. xx. 22: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee."

Prov. xxiv. 29: "Say not, I will do so to him, as he hath done to me."\*

Ver. 39: "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek," &c.

Bava Kama, fol. 92, 2 (tr. Mishna): "For what is the proverb which is commonly said? If thy neighbour calleth thee ass, place upon thyself an ass's saddle. For thus it is written, Genesis xvi. 8, Return to thy mistress, even though thou be much vexed by her."

Ver. 42: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away."

Eccles. iv. 5: "Turn not thine eye away from the needy."

Deut. xv. 8: "But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy poor brother, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need."

Jos. de Ess.: "Every one of them gives what he hath to him that wanteth it."

Ver. 43: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy."

Midrasch Tehillim, fol. 26, 4: "R. Isaac said, Show not benevolence nor mercy to the Gentiles."

Pesachim, fol. 113, 2 (tr. Mishna): "R. Samuel ben Isaac says from the mouth of Raf, that it is allowed to *hate him* in whom any one observes a base action, although not to give witness against him."

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\* The tone of the whole chapter in Proverbs is, however, very different from that in Matthew. Ver. 16—20 show that a forgiving spirit was not the motive acknowledged by the writer.

Aboth R. Nathan, c. 16: "Let not a man accustom himself to say, Love the wise men, and hate their disciples; love the disciples, and hate the rude multitude; but love all men, and *hate the Epicureans*, who impel men into errors."

Taanith, fol. 7, 2 (tr. Mishna): "Speaking of the stiff-necked and shameless, R. Nachman ben Isaac said, It is allowed to *hate him*."

So also among the Karæites, R. Elijahu in addereth, according to Triglandius, p. 167: "But for men who commit injuries, and never return with benefits so as to obtain forgiveness, it is nowise forbidden *to be avenged on them*, and to *keep anger* against them."

On which Triglandius observes, "It is clear from hence who those were, 'of old time,' to whom Christ opposes his 'I say,' viz. not the law, but those who, contrary to the law, were so sparing of their philanthropy." And Schoettgen adds, "Although the Karæites were much better than the Pharisees, yet we see traces of remarkable corruption amongst them."

Matt. v. 44: "Love your enemies."

Schabbath, fol. 88, 3 (tr. Mishna): "Our Rabbins deliver to us, They who receive scorn, but scorn no man; who hear reproaches, and return them not; who show love to men, and rejoice in tribulations,—of them the Scripture saith, They shall love him, and be as the sun going forth in his might."

Aboth R. Nathan, c. 23: "He is a hero who maketh his enemy a friend."

Siphra, fol. 174, 1: "If thou seest an Israelite who rejoices in the adversity of his enemy, he is perfectly impious."

Ver. 44: "Bless them that curse you."

Sanhedrin, fol. 48, 2; 49, 1: "R. Jehuda said from the mouth of Raf, They say thus in the common proverb, Suffer thyself to be cursed, but do not thou curse others."

Matt. v. 44: "Pray for them which despitefully use you."

Sohar Genes. fol. 67, col. 263: "It is commanded a man, that he *pray for the impious*, so that they may be converted for the better, and not descend into hell."

Ver. 45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

Debarim rabba, sect. 7, fol. 259, 3: "R. Jehuda ben Salum said, God said to the Israelites, If ye wish to be known as being my children, attend to the law and to good works, then all shall know that ye are my children."

Ver. 45: "And sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Taanith, fol. 7, 1. (tr. Mishna): "R. Afhu said, The day on which rain is sent, is greater than the resurrection of the dead, for this pertains to the just alone; but rain to the just and impious."

Taanith, fol. 23, 2: "When once the earth was suffering from drought, the Rabbins sent the boys from the school of Raf to Chone; and they, taking the hem of his garment, said, Give us rain. But he said before them, Lord of the whole world, do so for the sake of them who as yet know not the difference between a Father who can, and one who cannot, give rain."

Sohar Exod. fol. 70, col. 277: "God in this world feeds and preserves all things, the just and pious, and all the sons of men."

Ver. 46: "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? do not even publicans the same?"

Luke vi. 35: "Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again."

Pirke Aboth, c. v. 10: "There are four classes of men. One says, What is mine is mine, and what is thine is thine: this is a middling class, and some say that the people of Sodom were such. Another says, What is mine is thine, and

what is thine is mine: of such are the common people. He who says, What is mine is thine, and what is thine let it be thine;—he is pious. But he who says, What is thine is mine, and what is mine let it be mine;—he is impious.”

Matt. vi. 1: “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.”

Sohar, fol. 4, 1: “Whosoever lendeth to any one in public, with him God dealeth according to justice. But he who does it secretly, with him dwelleth the divine blessing.”

Bava bathra, fol. 10, 2 (tr. Mishna): “All alms and mercy done by the heathens are sins to them, since they do them only to obtain glory thereby.”

Ver. 3: “When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”

Bava bathra, fol. 10, 1: “What are the alms which free from the second death? Those which the giver knows not to whom he gives.”

Ver. 4: “Thy Father which seeth in secret.”

Breschith rabba, sect. 85, fol. 84, 1: “God said, Ye are able to testify of things done openly, but I of things done in secret.”

Sota, fol. 3, 1 (tr. Mishna, p. 80, Wagenseil): “There is a tradition, that R. Meir\* said, A man commits a sin in secret, but God divulges it openly.”

Synopsis Sohar, p. 94: “Whatsoever things are performed in secret, on them rests the blessing from above. But if a thing be done publicly, the blessing does not rest upon it.”

Pirke Aboth, c. iv. 4: “R. Jochanan ben Bruka\* said, Whosoever profaneth the name of God in secret, he shall be punished openly.”

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\* They flourished soon after the siege of Jerusalem.



Matt. vi. 6: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet."

Tanchuma, fol. 22, 2: "R. Benjamin ben Levi said, If any one sitteth apart, or in his closet, and studieth the law, I will make him known to men."

Sohar Genes. fol. 114, col. 454: "It is not needful that a man pray aloud, but he ought to pray in a low tone, so that his words may not be heard."

Ver. 7: "Use not vain repetitions."

Eccles. vii. 14: "Use not many words in a multitude of elders, and make not much babbling when thou prayest."

Berachoth, fol. 61, 1: "Let the words of a man always be few before the face of God."

R. Elijah the Karæite in Triglandius de Sectâ Karæorum, p. 168: "In vain will any one multiply idle words (in Hebrew the same as Matt. xii. 36) in his prayers."

Ver. 9: "Our Father which art in heaven."

Bamidbar rabba, sect. 17: "God is the Father, and the Israelites are his children." Then follows the proof that God had performed all the peculiar parental offices for Israel, viz. teaching the law, supplying food, &c.

Ver. 9: "Hallowed be thy name."

Eccl. xxiii. 9: "Use not thyself to the naming of the Holy One."

That the same formula of prayer was known to the Jews, is shown by a quotation from their ritual books, by Vitringa de Synagogâ Vet. lib. 3, p. 962. "His great name be magnified, and hallowed in the world, which he created according to his pleasure, and may his kingdom reign. May his redemption spring forth, and the anointed (Messiah) quickly come, and deliver his people."

Sohar Exod. fol. 55, col. 217: "There is no sanctification in heaven, unless there be sanctification on earth."

Sohar Deut. fol. 127, col. 503 : "When the number of sins is increased on the earth, then the holy name is not glorified on earth."\*

Matt. vi. 10 : "Thy kingdom come."

Sanhedrin, fol. 28, 2 : "R. Jehuda and R. Seira both said, Prayers which say nothing concerning the kingdom, do not deserve the name of prayers."

Sohar Genesis, fol. 103, 409 : "When a man goeth to bed, first of all he ought to take unto himself (in se suscipere) the kingdom of heaven. Afterward, let him recite one or another kind of prayer."

Ver. 10 : "In earth, as in heaven."

Sohar Exod. fol. 28, col. 110, 111 : "God wills that his name be glorified *on earth*, as it is glorious *in heaven*."

Sohar Exod. fol. 33, col. 131 : "When the Israelites approached Mount Sinai, angels came to them ; these are the angels in heaven, and the Israelites are the angels on earth ; they hallow the divine name in heaven, the Israelites hallow it on earth."

Ver. 11 : "Give us this day our daily bread."

Prov. xxx. 8 : "Feed me with food convenient for me."

Ver. 12 : "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Rosch haschana, fol. 17, 2 : "A man borrowed from another, and fixed a time for re-payment before the king, and swore by the life of the king. When the time was past, and

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\* Schoettgen remarks here, "Let it not be said that I maintain that Christ borrowed his prayers from the Jews, which opinion is very far from mine. For Christ, who is true God, consubstantial with the Father, has infinite wisdom, through which, even in the state of inanition, he was far wiser than all men, and therefore he could easily have prescribed a thousand formulas different from those of the Jews. But it pleased his wisdom to retain those things which he found to be good amongst the Jews, in which thing we, his followers, properly acquiesce."

he could not pay his debt, he came as a suppliant to the king, who said, What thou hast done against me is forgiven thee; but go to thy creditor, and seek forgiveness also of him. The same proceeding is held with respect to the sins committed by a man against God, and those which he commits against his neighbour."

Joma, fol. 85, 2 (tr. Mishna): "R. Eleazar ben Azaria\* gave this opinion: The day of expiation expiates the things which a man hath committed against God; but the things which he hath committed against his neighbour it doth not expiate until he hath returned into favour with him."

Synopsis Sohar, p. 90, n. 79: "A man ought every night to forgive the fault of him that offendeth him."

Ver. 13: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever."

1 Chron. xxix. 11: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all."

Ver. 14: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Eccles. xxviii. 2: "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee; so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest."

Ver. 17: "When thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face."

Breschith rabba,† sect. 74, fol. 73, 1: "Speaking of Isaac mourning for Joseph, R. Levi and R. Simeon said, He wept in his house, but when he came into public he washed and anointed himself, he ate and drank. But why did he not do

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\* Soon after the fall of Jerusalem.

† A part of the Midraschic book Rabboth.

that openly? God answered, Although he himself hath not made the thing manifest, yet I will make it manifest."

Matt vi. 19, 20: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

Eccles. xxix. 11: "Lay up thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall bring thee more profit than gold."

Berachoth, fol. 33, 2: "R. Chanina said, from the mouth of R. Simeon ben Jochai, "In the treasury of God there is no treasure but that of the fear of God, as Esaias saith, xxxiii. 6, The fear of God is his treasure."

Bava bathra, fol. 11, 1: "The brethren of King Mombazus reproached him for dilapidating the treasures of his ancestors, to which his fathers had always added. He replied, My fathers collected treasures on the earth, but I in heaven: my fathers laid up treasures in a place where the hand (of man) could rule them, but I lay up in a place whither no hand can reach."

Ver. 25: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

Psalm lv. 22: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

Philo de Ess.: "They eat no food more costly than coarse bread seasoned with salt . . . and drink no liquid but the clear water of the stream."

Ver. 26: Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

In the Gemara, Jerusalem Talmud, Kidduschin, according to Buxtorf's Lexicon, col. 2028, "Hast thou ever seen a lion carrying burdens, a stag gathering the summer fruits, a fox planting, or a wolf selling olives? And yet they are fed



without labour. But why were they created? To serve me. And why was I created? To serve my creator. Hence, from the less to the greater I conclude: if those creatures which were created to serve me are fed without labour, should not I rather, who was created to serve my creator? What is the cause, then, for which I am compelled to obtain my food by labour? Answer, My sins."

Ver. 30: "O ye of little faith."

Mechilta, fol. 32, 1: "He who created the day, created also the food thereof. Wherefore R. Eliezer said, Whosoever hath whereof to eat for to-day, and saith, But what shall I eat to-morrow? he is *of little faith*."

Sota, fol. 48, 2, p. 1075 edit. Wagenseil: "There is a tradition that R. Eliezer, surnamed the Great, said, Whosoever keepeth a mouthful remaining in his canister, and saith, What am I to eat to-morrow? he is of those who are little in faith."

Sohar Exod. fol. 26, col. 102: "All the children of the world look up and raise their eyes to God—nay, even all the believers seek every day their food from God, and on that account pour forth their prayers to God. What is the reason? This,—he who calleth on God for his food, he causeth the world every day to receive a blessing. Wherefore a man ought not to cook his food for the next day, nor to reserve any thing from to-day for the morrow. But he who asketh food only for to-day, he is called a man *of faith*."

Ver. 33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Berachoth, fol. 35, 2: "Whilst the Israelites do the will of God, their labour is performed for them by others; but when they do not the will of God, then they are compelled to do their labours with their own hands."

Avoda Sara, fol. 19, 2: "R. Joshua ben Levi said, Whosoever giveth labour to the law, his wealth is increased."

Matt. vii. 2: "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

Schabbath, fol. 127, 2: "Our Rabbins have delivered to us: He who judgeth his neighbour by the way of equity, of him shall others judge in the same manner."

Ver. 11: "If ye then being evil," &c.

Breschith rabba, sect. 33, fol. 32, 1: "In a time of drought, a man who had divorced his wife was seen to give her money. R. Tanchuma said to him, 'Why hast thou given her money?' The man answered, 'I saw that she was living miserably, and was filled with pity for her.' In that same hour R. Tanchuma raised his face to heaven, saying: 'Lord of all worlds, see what is done! When that woman had no food, this man saw her in her affliction, and was filled with compassion for her. But thou art he of whom it is written, Thou art merciful and kind; and we are the sons of thy beloved, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; how much the rather oughtest thou to be filled with compassion towards us!' Immediately rain descended, and the earth was revived."

In Vajikra rabba, sect. 34, fol. 179, 1, the words of Tanchum are as follows: "Lord of the whole world! this is a miserable and cruel man, and yet he hath been filled with compassion," &c.

Ver. 12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

Tobit iv. 15: "Do that to no man which thou hatest."

Aboth R. Nathan, c. 15: "As a man wisheth himself to be honoured, so let him shew the same honour to others."

And as a man doth not wish to hear himself ill spoken of, so let him beware of speaking ill of others."

Ver. 14: "Few there be that find it."

The doctrine of the small number of them that were saved was held by the Jews.

Succa, fol. 45, 2: "R. Jeremias said from the mouth of R. Simeon ben Jochai, I saw the sons of the feast (the blessed), who were very few in number. If there are a thousand, I and my son are of the number; if a hundred, I and my son are of the number; if two, I and my son are they."

Ver. 21: "But he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Pirke Aboth, c. ii. 4: "R. Gamaliel\* said, Do the will of God as thine, so that he may do thy will as his. Lay aside thine own will for the sake of his, so that he may render vain the will of others for the sake of thine."

Ver. 24: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them."

Vajikra rabba, sect. 35, fol. 179, 4: "It is a tradition of R. Chija, We learn the law, that we may do it. He who hath learned, and doeth not, it would have been better if he had not been created. R. Jochanan said, He who hath learned, and doeth not, it would have been better if he had not seen the light of this world."

Debarim rabba, sect. 7, fol. 259, 2: "R. Simeon ben Chelpatha said, He who hath learned the words of the law and doeth them not, is more guilty than he who hath learned

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\* R. Gamaliel the elder, the preceptor of Paul, died A.D. 52. R. Gamaliel the second, or of Jafna, flourished soon after the fall of Jerusalem.

nothing. A certain king sent two gardeners into his garden : the one planted trees, but afterwards cut them down ; the other planted nothing, and cut down nothing. With which of these was the king wroth ? Was it not with him who planted and cut down ?”

Matt. vii. 24, 25 : “ I will liken him to a wise man . . . . And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,” &c.

Pirke Aboth, c. iii. 17 : “ R. Eleazar ben Azariah said, He whose knowledge is greater than his works, to whom is he like ?—to a tree, whose branches are many, but his roots few, and the wind rushing upon it teareth it up. But he whose works are greater than his knowledge, to whom is he like ?—to a tree whose branches are few and his roots many, against which if all the winds in the world should beat, they cannot move it from its place.”

Ver. 16 : “ Wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

Schir Haschirim rabba, fol. 15, 3 : “ R. Jehuda the son of R. Simon said, God said concerning the Israelites, Towards me they are harmless (integri) as doves, but towards the nations cunning (astuti) as serpents.”

Ver. 28 : “ Fear not them which are able to kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.”

Jos. de Ess. : “ Their doctrine is, that bodies are corruptible, but that the souls are immortal and continue for ever ; . . . and when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then rejoice and mount upwards.”

Ver. 35 : “ For I am come to set a man at variance against his father,” &c.

Sota, fol. 49, 2 : “ A little before the coming of Messias, the son shall provoke the father, the daughter shall rise against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her



mother-in-law; finally, each shall have his enemies in his household."

Sanhedrin, fol. 97, 1, ex versione Edzardi: "R. Nehorai said, In the age when the Messiah shall come, the young men will scorn the face of the elders, the elders will stand against the young men, and the daughter against her mother-in-law, and the men of that age will have faces as dogs (impudence), nor will the son revere his father."\*

Matt. xii. 34: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Sepher rasiel haggadol, fol. 10, 1: "The tongue uttereth the hidden secrets of the heart, whether they be good or bad."

xviii. 4: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest," &c.

Tanchuma, fol. 36, 4: "R. Ame said, It is great glory to a young man, when he becometh as little children."

Bava Mezia, fol. 84, 2 (tr. Mishna): "Whosoever maketh himself little on account of the words of the law in this world, he becometh great in the world to come."

Ver. 7: "Wo unto the world because of offences."

Sohar Genes, fol. 33, col. 132: "Wo to the world, for they are stupid in heart, and with closed eyes, so that they understand not the mysteries of the law."

Ibid. fol. 37, col. 146: "Wo to the world, for they have eyes, and see not."

xix. 17: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

Eccles. xix. 19: "The knowledge of the commandments of the Lord is the doctrine of life; and they that do things which please him shall receive the fruit of the tree of immortality."

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\* The whole of this is, probably, an enlargement of Malachi iv. 6, and Micah vii. 6.

Matt. xx. 26, 27: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Philo de Ess.: "They have no slaves among them, but all are free, and all in their turn administer to others."

xxii. 2—10: Parable of the marriage of the king's son.

Sohar Levit. fol. 40, col. 158: "A king made a splendid feast, and said to his servants, Ye have been every day at your homes; one hath pursued his work, another hath gone to his merchandize, a third to his field. But on this day, when ye ought all to take part in my joy, I will not that ye attend to your work, or your merchandize, or your fields, but ye ought all to be in readiness, for the day is mine."

Ver. 7: "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city."

Tanchuma, fol. 86, 3: "Know that the king is wroth with you, and will send his legions against the city, and destroy it."

Ver. 21: "Unto God the things that are God's."

Pirke Aboth, c. 111, 7: "R. Eleazar Bartolensis said, Give to him (God) of his own, since whatsoever things thou hast are his."

Ver. 30: "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

Berachoth, fol. 17, 1: "Raf frequently had these words in his mouth, In the world to come they will neither eat nor drink, nor beget children, nor carry on trade; neither envy, nor hatred, nor strife, is there; but the just will sit encircled with crowns, and will rejoice in the splendour of the divine majesty."

Sohar Chadasch, fol. 20, 1: "All the souls of the just are in the seventh heaven, and become ministering angels, and celebrate God."

Ver. 36: "Which is the great commandment in the law?"

Neither Lightfoot nor Schoettgen quotes any Rabbinical sayings corresponding with the answer of Jesus.\*

Ver. 40: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Deut. iv. 5: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Levit. xix. 18: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Matt. xxiii. 8: "Be not ye called Rabbi."

Nedarim, fol. 62, 1 (tr. Mishna). A tradition concerning the words of Deut. xxx. 20: "Let not a man say, I will apply diligently to the study of the law, so that they may call me Rabbi; I will attend to the Talmud, so that I may become an Elder, and obtain a place in the academy. But thou shouldest study from the love of God, and at length honours will be attained."

Ver. 23: "The weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith."

Hosea vi. 6: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Mark vii. 8: "Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."

Sota, fol. 4, 2: "R. Serika said from the mouth of R. Eliezer, Whosoever neglecteth his washing, he is rooted out

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\* Mendelsohn relates the following story, *Jerus.* vol. ii. p. 110: "Rabbi," said a pagan to Hillel the elder (who lived in the century before Christ), "wilt thou teach me the whole law while I am standing on one leg?" Hillel replied, "Son, love thy neighbour like thyself. This is the text of the law; all the rest is commentary. Now go thy ways and study."

of the world. R. Chija ben Ase said from the mouth of Raf, If any one useth the first water (i. e. before eating) he must raise his hands ; but if he useth the latter water, he must hold his hands downward."

Mark xii. 44 : " She of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Sohar, fol. 3, 1 : " A poor man's sacrifice is by far the most pleasing to God, for he offereth two sacrifices ; one, the sacrifice itself ; the other, inasmuch as he offers his own nourishment and blood ; for he hath nothing to eat, and yet he offereth sacrifice."

Luke xi. 41 : " But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you."

Isaiah lviii. 6, 7 : " Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness . . . is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ? Then shall thy light spring forth as the morning," &c.

Luke xii. 19, 20 : " And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years : take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Eccles xi. 19 : " Whereas he (the rich man) saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods ; and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave those things to others, and die."

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Notwithstanding the striking resemblance thus shown between a great part of the Gospels and the Rabbinical writings, it is impossible not to acknowledge a general



superiority in the former. Not only are particular precepts delivered with greater force, but the whole collection is, for the most part, free from the trifles and absurdities which abound in the latter: and where a difference or contrast occurs, liberality and good sense usually predominate on the side of Jesus. He appears to have been well acquainted with the doctrines which proceeded from the Jewish schools; but, unlike the Pharisees, he claimed the privilege of independent thought in selecting, altering, or adding to them; the Messiah was entitled to neglect the usual servile method of literal quotation, and to set his own "I say" above the authority of any Rabbin. A teacher thus assuming an office which could allow him to neglect the charge either of plagiarism or of heresy, would have at the same time the advantages arising from the use of stores already provided, and those resulting from the free exercise of the mind's own powers. A system of doctrine proceeding under such circumstances from a character like that which we have endeavoured to trace, might be expected to present a remarkable combination both of peculiarities and of excellences. The selection of the most striking features from collections of written and traditional precepts is, probably, best performed by the quick intuitive sense of powerful minds, unburdened by extensive learning, and whose original energy has not been repressed by an habitual submission to scholastic forms and authorities. The preceptive part of the Gospels appears before us as the result obtained by the sifting of the Jewish scriptures and of the lessons of the Jewish schools by such a mind, and by the infusion of fresh and purer material from its own resources.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

WHATEVER be the spirit with which the four Gospels be approached, it is impossible to rise from the attentive perusal of them without a strong reverence for Jesus Christ. Even the disposition to cavil and ridicule is forced to retire before the majestic simplicity of the prophet of Nazareth.\* Unlike Moses or Mahomet, he owes no part of the lustre which surrounds him to his acquisition of temporal power; his is the ascendancy which mankind, in proportion to their mental advancement, are least disposed to resist—that of moral and intellectual greatness. Besides, his cruel fate engages men's affections on his behalf, and gives him an additional hold upon their allegiance. A noble-minded reformer and sage, martyred by crafty priests and brutal soldiers, is a spectacle which forces men to gaze in pity and admiration. The precepts from such a source come with an authority which no human laws could give; and Jesus is more powerful on the cross of Calvary than he would have been on the throne of Israel.

The virtue, wisdom, and sufferings of Jesus, then, will secure to him a powerful influence over men so long as they continue to be moral, intellectual and sympathizing

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\* Paine calls him a virtuous reformer.

“ Il fallait bien qu'au fond il fût un sage, puisqu'il déclamaît contre les pêtres imposteurs, et contre les superstitions ; mais on lui impute des choses qu'un sage n'a pu ni faire ni dire.”—*Voltaire's xx. Dialogue, by the Abbé de Tilladet.*

Mendelsohn says, that intelligent Jews consider Jesus as a generous enthusiast. *Jerusalem*, vol. ii.

beings. And as the tendency of human improvement is towards the progressive increase of these qualities, it may be presumed that the empire of Christianity, considered simply as the influence of the life, character, and doctrine of Christ over the human mind, will never cease.

The most fastidious scepticism is forced to admit the truth of the facts, which such a view of Christianity requires. For no one who regards historical evidence will deny that such a person was put to death in Judea, and that he gave rise to a new system of religion. The four Gospels on these points are strengthened by many other testimonies, agree with each other, and contain relations conformable to the order of nature. Moreover, the excellence of the preceptive parts of the Gospels carries with it its own evidence in all ages.

But when a higher office is claimed for Christ, that of a messenger accredited from God by a supernatural birth, miraculous works, a resurrection, and an ascension, we may reasonably expect equal strength of evidence. But how stands the case? The four Gospels on these points are *not* confirmed by testimony out of the church, disagree with each other, and contain relations contrary to the order of things. The evidence on these points is reduced to the authority of these narratives themselves. In *them*, at least, the most candid mind may require strong proofs of authenticity and veracity; but again, what is the case? They are anonymous productions; their authorship is far from certain; they were written from forty to seventy years after the events which they profess to record; the writers do not explain how they came by their information; two of them appear to have copied from the first; all the four contain notable discrepancies and manifest contradictions; they contain statements at variance with histories of acknowledged authority; some of them relate wonders which

even many Christians are obliged to reject as fabulous ; and in general they present no character by which we can distinguish their tales of miracles from the fictions which every church has found some supporters ready to vouch for on its behalf.

In these books, and by the propagators of Christianity, the miraculous part of Christ's history is presented to us not as an indifferent fact, but as one which is to influence our whole life and conduct : the belief or non-belief of it is even to decide our condition in another world : we are called upon to count all things as loss for the sake of Christ : " He that believeth in his heart that God hath raised him from the dead, shall be saved ;" " He that believeth not shall be damned." One would have expected that the clearness of the evidence would have been in proportion to the necessity for belief, and that a fact of which the recognition was requisite to the salvation or improvement of mankind in after ages, would have been attested in such a manner as to leave no doubt of it in any reasonable mind. Mark, or the person who has finished his Gospel for him, would have done more to promote belief, if, instead of threatening damnation on the want of it, he had explained the apparent contradictions between his account and Matthew's ;—how it was that the latter sends the eleven disciples into Galilee, whilst the others seem to represent them as remaining at Jerualem ; why Matthew omitted all notice of the ascension ; where and when Jesus was seen by the five hundred brethren mentioned by Paul ; and especially how he and his fellow evangelists obtained their information. But the fact is, that the accounts of Christ's resurrection are in so imperfect and slovenly a state, that the evidence afforded by them would be hardly deemed sufficient to establish an ordinary fact of any importance in a court of judicature. The accounts of the crucifixion are very cir-



cumstantial, and agree in the main so well, that we should have no difficulty in admitting this as a fact, even if it were not confirmed by Tacitus, Suetonius, and the Jews. But when the writers come to the account of the resurrection, on which, from its not being confirmed by heathen or Jewish testimonies, from its deviation from the laws of nature, and from the great importance attached to the belief of it, we should have looked, from their hands at least, for the fullest, clearest, and most accordant evidence,—here we find the story replete with confusion, contradiction, and chasms, and even to be made up apparently of fragments of different dates.

If the resurrection of Christ were necessary, as is pretended, to account for the rest of his history, and the origin of Christianity, the attempts made to strain out a consistent account of it from the materials before us, by inventing supplementary facts *ad libitum*, might deserve some attention. But there is in reality no such necessity. The order of nature, the combination of human feelings and motives at the particular juncture in question, have been shown to be enough to account for the life and death of Jesus, and the proceedings of his followers. And whatever be our disposition to show deference towards Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or the persons writing under their names, the inquirers for truth are obliged to ask, Who are these that we should believe them in contradiction to the known order of nature, and receive from them, as indubitable truth, stories which, coming from other mouths, we should reject at once as palpable fiction? Where are the proofs of their caution, judgment, and veracity? How are we assured that they could neither be misled, nor attempt to mislead? They vouch for the resurrection of Christ; but who shall vouch for them, and certify that they were so far different from the rest of men as to be void of credulity, and incapable of mistake or falsehood? What

witness is there to prove that they were so insensible to common human motives, as to be incapable of gratifying their love of the marvellous, and of serving their own cause, and that of their church, by either adopting or inventing "idle tales?"

That the resurrection of Jesus was intended as a pledge to mankind of a general resurrection, is a delightful idea. But the only safe basis for such a belief is historical evidence. If this fail to establish the fact, the agreeable nature of the belief is so far from proving it, that it rather furnishes an explanation of the general prevalence of the belief in the face of insufficient evidence.

It is not pretended that the foregoing pages prove the absolute impossibility of Christ's miracles and resurrection. If we be so determined, we may still indulge in the belief of them, by overlooking difficulties, inventing hypotheses, and concluding that the whole is a trial of our faith. But if the reasoner will still hold the reality of these miracles, to what scheme must he have recourse? That God has caused a deviation from the course of nature for the instruction of mankind, and has left the account of it to be conveyed to them by means which, on the closest examination, occasion it to bear a strong resemblance to human fictions; a supposition so monstrous and perplexing, that, notwithstanding the value of the supposed lesson, our minds turn at last from this mode of teaching in weariness, and resolve to be contented to learn where we are sure, at least, that the lessons proceed from God himself—and that is in nature.

The miraculous birth, works, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, being thus successively surrendered, to be classed amongst the fables of an obscure age, what remains of Christianity? and what is there in the life and doctrine of Jesus that they should still claim the attention and respect of man-

kind in remote ages? This : Christianity forms a striking passage in the history of human nature, and appears as one of the most prominent of the means employed in its improvement. It no longer boasts of a special divine origin, but shares in that which the Theist attributes to the world and the whole order of its events. It has presented to the world a system of moral excellence ; it has led forth the principles of humanity and benevolence from the recesses of the schools and groves, and compelled them to take an active part in the affairs of life. It has consolidated the moral and religious sentiments into a more definite and influential form than had before existed, and thereby constituted an engine which has worked powerfully towards humanizing and civilizing the world.

Moreover, Christianity has given currency to the sublime doctrines of man's relationship to the Deity, and of a future state. The former was a leading feature of Judaism, and the latter of Platonism. Christianity has invested them with the authority of established principles, and thereby contributed much to the moral elevation of mankind.

It is impossible to disguise the momentous consequence of the rejection of the divine origin of Christianity—that a future state is thereby rendered a matter of speculation, instead of certainty. If Jesus was not seen after he was risen, we no longer see immortality brought to light ; the veil which nature has left before this mysterious subject, still remains undrawn ; and, like the Jews, and all heathen nations, we are compelled to rest satisfied with the conjectures to which reason alone can attain. With respect to one of the subjects most interesting to man, we return into the position in which the whole race stood for four thousand years, and in which a great part has remained ever since.

The withdrawal of a proof on which we had relied is not,

however, equivalent to a disproof. The arguments of natural reason, on behalf of a future state, still remain; and when it is recognized that these are all which the order of things allows of, the mind which feels the want of this doctrine may learn to dwell upon them with increased interest, and to be content with that degree of evidence on this point which has been compatible with the happy existence of many generations of men, and with the tranquillity of many virtuous and reflecting minds in all ages. Christianity has added, at least, so much light to the subject, that it has shown, on a large scale, the effect which the belief of this doctrine has upon the character; and if it be allowed that this effect is the strengthening and refinement of virtue, there arises an additional and strong presumption of the truth of the doctrine.\*

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\* If the mind be supposed to be distinct from the brain, the dissolution of the latter affords no argument against the continued existence of the former. And even if the mind be considered to be merely a function of the brain, the objection arising hence to a future life of individuals is not of much weight. For, with our present imperfect knowledge of the ultimate composition and structure of the particles of the brain, we cannot tell whether the portions of it supposed to be connected with identity, consciousness, moral and intellectual power, may not contain some provision for transmitting these functions to entirely different forms of matter after death. Since these same principles are continued in or transferred to successive accretions of matter during life, there is no absurdity in supposing that after death the transference may be made to an entirely new recipient. The revival of the mental powers after sleep, or cerebral injuries, shows that these powers may be, for a time, to all appearance gone, and yet be capable of renewal with all those characteristics which give the common notion of identity. Now, we can imagine that the lethargy should continue long enough to allow of the whole, instead of a part, of the particles of the body being replaced by new ones, and yet that the consciousness of identity might return; a case very nearly approaching that of the supposed transference in the case of death.

Hence the objections to a future life of individuals, on physical grounds, seem only to amount to this,—that we are as yet ignorant of the means by which it could be brought about. But ignorance of this kind is so frequent, even with respect to many very palpable facts, that it forms but a slight argument against a well-urged possibility; and incredulity with respect to



Yet if all the efforts of reason should end in demonstrating the mere probability of a future state, what must be our conclusion? That certainty on this point is not at present necessary, nor even desirable for men; and that the objects of their existence in this world are best answered by their having an obscure rather than a clear view of another. Whilst it was thought that Jesus had brought the guarantee of heaven for man's immortality, we persuaded ourselves that this was necessary to men's improvement and happiness. We were mistaken; no such guarantee has been given; it is wise still to acquiesce, and to conclude that happiness and improvement are best promoted by our present ignorance.

It is undeniable that, to reflecting and religious minds,

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the doctrine in question must proceed from its improbability, as arising from other than physical considerations.

But it can hardly be denied, that the moral considerations, viz. the desire for immortal life peculiar to man, his curiosity with respect to the cause and end of his own existence, his conceptions of perfection, his tendency to connect himself with the Deity and the invisible world, the strength of human attachments, the sufferings of good men, and the like,—do make out a case deserving of much attention. These facts are of a different kind from those on which scientific conclusions rest, but are not therefore to be regarded as a less sure basis for reasoning. On the contrary, we might naturally expect, that the evidence of a future existence of man would arise out of facts connected with his mental and moral constitution: in which case it is probable, that only with the perfection of this part of his nature will the evidence on this subject appear in the clearness which produces certainty.

That the Divine mind bears some resemblance to the human, is shown by the contrivances in the creation, of which many are similar in kind, although higher in degree, to the indications of human art and skill. The same correspondence of thought and feeling, if the terms may be used, is seen in the apparent ends and objects of the contrivances. This fact of a resemblance being thus established in respect to qualities which we know to belong to the human mind, we may reason the other way, and infer that the human mind bears a resemblance to the Divine, with respect to the attributes which we know to belong to the latter. The permanence of the creation indicates the immortality of the Deity; hence arises a probability that the human mind, in those parts at least which resemble the Divine, is immortal also.

the removal of the authority of revelation does at first seem to leave a blank on the subjects of the human condition and destiny which no reasoning can fill up. Those who had been accustomed to look to the New Testament as their only light, see nothing but confusion when it is taken away, and are tempted to look at human existence as a waste, of which both the beginning and the end are lost in darkness. It was natural, however, that in their anxiety to appreciate the supposed revelation, men should do injustice to the world and nature. When they are compelled to part with the former, these gradually resume their claims, and remind them that their position here, regarded for itself alone, is replete with interest and enjoyment. The return of first one object of pleasing thought, and then another, forces upon them the conviction of the high privilege of existence; and the withdrawal into obscure remoteness of the future eternal life, may even leave them the more free to appreciate the advantages of their present more limited but more accessible sphere. The eye which fails to distinguish heaven falls contentedly into the more easy contemplation of the beauties of earth. A thicker veil being thrown before the incomprehensible joys of a future state, the mind returns to count over more earnestly the blessings within its immediate reach, and is surprised at the extent of its almost unheeded riches. It perceives that to *live* is gain. In accustomed occupations, or favourite pursuits; in its relationships and intercourse with mankind; in the perpetual novelty arising from the vicissitudes of national or individual life; in the free admission either to behold or take part in the great drama of the world; or in the tranquil cultivation of its powers, or exercise of its affections—it recognizes abundant and ever-varying stores of enjoyment, requiring only its own energy to be immediately worked out. The voice of mankind, as well as of books, still

captivates the attention; the hill and the river still delight the eye; solitude soothes, and society interests; and the mind, acquiring a keener perception of happiness from its review, is startled into the admission, that the heaven which it looked forward to in the remote distance is already close at hand.

But this is the language of prosperity. Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of adversity; and what can compensate the afflicted for the loss of the assurance of those mansions where Jesus is preparing a place for them? Even here it may, perhaps, be recognized, that the compensation supplied by nature and the mind's own resources had not been sufficiently estimated. The list of the pleasures arising out of adversity, and of which this alone can awaken the perception, is large enough to induce us to suspend the wish that there should be no gloomy side to the human condition. The consciousness of fortitude developed by emergencies, and of refinement of character produced by reverses; increased opportunities for the interchange of the kindly sympathies; and the enlargement of views proceeding from an acquaintance with the most diversified aspects of life;—afford pleasures felt to be so substantial, that few men probably, on calm consideration, would consent to have the dark pages of their history replaced by the most brilliant ones.

Yet it must be owned that there are states in which all such reasonings are felt to be insipid, and in which the human mind feels a deeper want,—that of Christianity, or of something equivalent to it. And why may not such a state itself bring with it the consoling convictions which itself requires, and be regarded as nature's silent but powerful argument, which she has framed in such a manner that its force shall only be understood in proportion as the want of it is felt? The extreme evils to which individuals are exposed,

during the slow progress of the race towards perfection, form too conspicuous a feature in the history of man to be overlooked in our review of the final causes of his condition. Why should we not regard these evils, not as unavoidable or permitted imperfections, but as ordained \* for a direct and adequate object, to convey a solemn lesson, and to complete the evidence—imperfect if prosperity were the invariable human condition—for an existence beyond the grave? Prosperity is satisfied with the glaring surface of this world's picture, and neglects futurity: adversity leads aside to the contemplation of a more hidden scene, and discloses the necessity and value of a future state. Christianity itself proceeded from a nation in deep adversity; out of the distresses of Israel issued the cry for immortality. May we not regard all irremediable earthly afflictions as intended to suggest Christianity to each sufferer, and to whisper, that there must be a Father in heaven, and mansions of the blessed?

It has not unfrequently happened, that the untutored feelings of mankind have anticipated the results of philosophic investigation. Nature has spoken first; reasoning and science have followed slowly with a confirmation of her voice. Men had not been long upon the earth before the ideas of a great Father of the universe, and of a region of spirits, began to develop themselves. In this, as in every case which exhibits the progress of truth, rational doctrines have had to force their way through a primeval chaos of dark and mis-shapen notions; and Christianity exhibits the shape to which the workings of the human kind had brought these ideas at a certain stage of the world's progress. The extensive attainments of science in later ages have tended to confirm the

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\* The distinction between permitting and ordaining must vanish in the case of a Creator both omniscient and omnipotent.



former great doctrine ; but hitherto philosophical research has not fallen upon the avenues which lead to the development of the latter. Science and philosophy are, however, yet in their infancy, and especially as regards their application to subjects supposed to be connected with morality and religion. The belief that Revelation has assumed these subjects as her own peculiar ground, has hitherto impeded the growth of free inquiry upon them amongst nations most competent to the task.\* Released from this restraint, and having unbounded scope to traverse the creation in search of evidence, mankind may reach points in moral discovery which at present would be at once pronounced visionary. The achievements of mechanical and chemical science may be equalled or outdone by those of moral and intellectual research ; and a clearer confession be forced out of nature concerning the character of the Creator, and the ultimate destination of man. In the mean time may it not be, that the feelings of the human

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\* Whenever any great revolutions in opinion have been in progress, it has appeared to many that the ties of morality were being unloosed, and that the mental world was falling into the darkest confusion. Such was the idea of the heathens whilst Christianity was throwing down their venerable ancient deities. Eunapius, a heathen sophist, who wrote in the time of the emperor Theodosius I., giving an account of an Egyptian philosopher named Antoninus, says, " He foretold to all his disciples that, after his death, there would be no temples, but that the magnificent and sacred temple of Serapis would be laid in ruinous heaps, and that fabulous confusion and unformed darkness would tyrannize over the best parts of the earth. All which things time has brought to pass."

We see at present the incipient upheavings of another of these revolutions—the subversion of the belief in miraculous revelations, and the gradual advance of a system of natural religion, of which we cannot yet predict the whole creed, but of which we may already perceive two essential features, the recognition of a God, and that of an inherent moral nature in man. As the clearing away of the antiquated piles of the old law made way for the simpler structure of faith in Christ, so will the release from the exclusive authority of written precept enable men to hear more distinctly the voice of the moral nature within them. Reformed Judaism will be succeeded by reformed Christianity, and each change appear the transition to a more perfect law of liberty.

heart have anticipated the laborious operations of the intellect, and that Christianity has taken the advance of philosophy in ministering to the deepest wants of man ?

Let not, then, the mind which is compelled to renounce its belief in miraculous revelations deem itself bound to throw aside, at the same time, all its most cherished associations. Its generous emotions and high contemplations may still find an occasion for exercise in the review of the interesting incidents which have for ever consecrated the plains of Palestine ; but it may also find pleasure in the thought that, for this exercise, no single spot of earth, and no one page of its history, furnishes the exclusive theme. Whatever dimness may gather from the lapse of time and the obscurity of records about the events of a distant age, these capabilities of the mind itself remain, and always will remain, in full freshness and beauty. Other Jerusalems will excite the glow of patriotism, other Bethanies exhibit the affections of home, and other minds of benevolence and energy seek to hasten the approach of the kingdom of man's perfection. Nor can scriptures ever be wanting—the scriptures of the physical and of the moral world—the book of the universe. Here the page is open, and the language intelligible to all men ; no transcribers have been able to interpolate or erase its texts ; it stands before us in the same genuineness as when first written ; the simplest understanding can enter with delight into criticism upon it ; the volume does not close, leaving us to thirst for more, but another and another epistle still meets the inquisitive eye, each signed with the author's own hand, and bearing undoubted characters of divine inspiration. Unable at present to comprehend the whole, we can still feel the privilege of looking into it at pleasure, of knowing a part, and of attempting the opening of further leaves. And if, after its highest efforts, the mind

be compelled to sink down, acknowledging its inability, in some parts, to satisfy itself with any clear conclusion, it may remain serene at least, persuaded that God will not cause any soul to fare the worse for not knowing what he has given it no means to know. Enough is understood to enable us to see, in the Universe itself, a Son which tells us of a Father, and in all the natural beauty and moral excellence which meet us in the world an ever-present Logos, which reveals the grace and truth of its invisible source. Enough is understood to convince us that, to have a place on this beautiful planet, on almost any terms, is an unspeakable privilege; that virtue produces the highest happiness, whether for this or another world; and that there does exist an encircling mysterious Intelligence, which, as it appears to manifest its energy in arrangements for the general welfare of the creation, must ensure a provision for all the real interests of man. From all our occasional excursions into the abysses of the unseen world, and from all our efforts to reach upwards to the hidden things of God, both reason and piety bid us return tranquilly to our accustomed corner of earth, to use and enjoy fully our present lot, and to repose implicitly upon the higher wisdom in whose disposal we stand, whilst indulging the thought that a time is appointed when the cravings of the heart and of the intellect will be satisfied, and the enigma of our own and the world's existence be solved.





## APPENDIX.

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PAGE 48.

JAHN'S Biblical Antiquities, translated by Upham, sec. 261, describes the process of death under crucifixion, as extracted from a dissertation by Geo. Gottlieb Richter, a German physician.

In addition to the unnatural position of the body, the loss of blood, and inflammation of the parts wounded, he says: "On those parts which are distended or pressed, more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back into the veins. The consequence is, that a greater quantity of blood finds its way from the aorta into the head and stomach, than would be carried there by an undisturbed circulation. The blood-vessels of the head become pressed and swollen. The impulsion of the blood in more than ordinary quantities into the stomach is also unfavourable to life, because it is that part of the system which not only admits of the blood being stationary, but is peculiarly exposed to mortification. The aorta not being at liberty to empty in the usual free and undisturbed way the blood which it receives from the left ventricle of the heart, is unable to receive its usual quantity. The blood of the lungs, therefore, is unable to find a free circulation. This general obstruction extends its effect also to the right ventricle, and the consequence is an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety, which are more intolerable than the anguish of death itself. All the large vessels about the heart, and all the veins and arteries in that part of the system, on account of the accumulation and pressure of blood, are the source of inexpressible misery. The degree of anguish is gradual in its increase, and the person crucified is able to live under it, commonly till the third, and sometimes till the seventh day."

C. F. F. Gruner, "*de Jesu C. morte verâ non Synopticâ*, Jena 1800," argues that Jesus possessed probably a healthy constitution of body, from his habit of living in the open air and of frequent travelling; but that the presentiment of his fate, and the harassing scenes attending his apprehension, would have had a depressing effect on his physical strength. "*Sequuntur alia graviora vim vitæ deprimentia. Addictus cruci, pugnis ac palmis contusus, coronâ spineâ cinctus miseréque laceratus, nudus et ad columnam adstrictus, cæditur ante loris et flagris, ut moris Romani erat. Quæ cum essent aculeata, taxillata, et ossiculis catenata, et miseri ad necem*

usque flagellati ministrorum immanitate\* haud rarò perierunt, quin sub ipsâ deductione stimulis† crudeliter atque petulanter adigerentur, consequens est, ut Christum fame ac vigiliis lassum, ex vulneribus crebris ægrum, et a sanguine vacuum, summa teneret debilitas. Auxit sine dubio legalis crucis gestatio crudos cutis laceræ dolores, attrivitque ulterius vires, denique perfecit malum crux ipsa erecta, cui crudeliter adstrictus et adfixus erat, clavis per manus et pedes actis. Hinc vehementissime exacerbati sunt dolores et ad omne corpus diffusi, hinc post hæmorrhagiam largam loca sugillata, inflammata et in gangrænam prona, hinc magna circuitus sanguinei turbatio, hinc immensa sanguinis ad pulmones et cor congestio facta, eaque, ni omnis fallor, summæ anxietatis auctor et effectrix fuit, quam clamore magno prodidisse videtur, illico mortuus.” He continues to this effect, “The things hitherto related, however, *do not occasion speedy death*, for some lived several days; another cause for the unexpected dissolution must be sought, viz.: *Syncope*, by which the vital power was paralyzed, and all life appeared to be extinguished. Syncope not unfrequently precedes or brings on real death, unless proper means of recovery are adopted.‡ Christ being placed in a cold and rocky tomb, tending to congeal the blood, would probably have expired rather than revived.”

But the thrust of the spear, if historical, is a more evident and sufficient cause of death. “In some parts, and especially if not forcible, it might not wound fatally. The soldier, holding his lance in his right hand, would probably pierce the left side of Jesus, where the weapon might meet the lungs, the pericardium, the heart, and the great artery. On the right side the lance might meet the lungs, the vena cava, and the azygoi; behind, the thoracic duct. In any case the blow, if forcible, would in all probability inflict death, either immediate or inevitable within a short time.”

“The lungs, if pierced, might have given forth some blood, but not water. Most probably the blood came from one of the ventricles of the heart; the water from the pericardium.” Gruner offers no explanation of the difficulty that the blood and water should flow out separately so as to be distinguished by a bystander; a difficulty which others could explain only by resorting to a miracle. Strauss has remarked that the quantity of liquid from the pericardium, except in dropsical cases, is so small that its flow would not strike the eye; besides, that there is only one small space in the forepart of the chest where the pericardium could be struck so that its liquid contents should flow outwards; in all other cases it would spread into the interior of the cavity of the chest. He adds, that as the blood does not separate into the serum and clot in the body itself, but only some time

\* Ulpius de Pœnis, l. iii. Euseb. H. E. iv. 15. Philo in Flaccum.

† Plaut. Mostellar. Act i. Sc. i., v. 52—54.

‡ Eschenbach says that in syncope the blood is still flowing, but more slowly; that true stories of revivals from this state usually place them within one or two days; and that cases of three days or a week rest on no good authority.

after being drawn from it, the writer may have added this incident of the *issue* of blood and water with a view to prove that Jesus was really dead, a proof however resting only on his own misconception of the medical fact.

The vehement asseveration which follows, ("And he that saw it, bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," ver. 35) Strauss considers to apply to this issue of blood and water, which was indeed the last circumstance mentioned. Yet it is possible that this solemn testimony was intended to apply to the whole scene just related, viz.: that the legs of the thieves were broken, but Jesus himself pierced with a spear; for these two are evidently the points which conduce to the writer's object, to make his readers "believe," being, as he pretends to discover, the fulfilment of the Scriptures. The flow of blood and water is not necessary for this purpose, and therefore would not require so much stress to be laid upon it; although it is true that he might have introduced this embellishment from the erroneous idea alluded to.

I hesitate to admit that the whole scene was invented in order to fulfil these two texts, because—1stly; They are unconnected sentences from remote parts of Scripture, and, although there is some evidence that the latter had been applied by the Rabbins to the Messiah, it was unnatural to think of framing a story so as to bring together the fulfilment of both; whereas the incidents being historical, it was natural to collect applicable texts wherever they could be found. 2ndly; The circumstances have strong inherent probability; for it being necessary to remove the bodies, the soldiers must be sent to despatch the criminals; and if the lifeless appearance of Jesus caused them to pause for a moment, nothing could be more natural than for one of these Roman soldiers speedily to make the case sure by means of the spear which he held.

Supposing for a moment that, after all, life was not extinct in Jesus, it is reasonable to believe that he would have required at least equal medical care with the friend of Josephus, whose recovery was by no means easy. He would not have been able to walk about the country after two days, as the subsequent legends represent. Consequently none of these legends coincide in any manner with the hypothesis that he still lived. None of them represent him as giving his parting directions in a posture or situation which we can reconcile with the idea of an extremely debilitated frame.

## PAGE 114.

A passage in Macrobius has been sometimes cited in support of Matthew's story of the children. Among the jests of Augustus, is the following: "When he heard that *among the children within two years of age which Herod king of the Jews commanded to be slain in Syria*, his own son had been killed, he said, 'It is better to be Herod's hog than his son.'"

Macrobius wrote about A. D. 400, when the Gospel of Matthew was generally known throughout the empire; and if he did write these words, from what other source is it likely that he could have borrowed them?

But the passage bears the strongest marks of forgery. Macrobius was

in all probability a Heathen; and why should he go out of his way to give such a careful confirmation to one of Matthew's most questionable passages? No Heathen or Christian writer has stated that Herod killed a son under two years of age. Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater, whom he caused to be put to death, were all young men. The saying of Augustus would therefore be equally witty, and more true, without any allusion to the infants of Bethlehem.

As the transcribers of the empire became Christian, we can imagine the temptation they must have felt to render such an easy but essential service to their new faith, as the manufacturing of Heathen and Jewish testimonies. Macrobius was likely to receive the same treatment as Josephus.

Voltaire says (*Philos. tom. iv.*), but without naming his authority, that the ancient copies of Macrobius had not the clause in question.

#### PAGE 146.

The length to which this volume has extended prevents the insertion of the whole of the notes on which the assertions respecting the Gospels of Mark and Luke are grounded; but the following will explain the method of examination adopted.

#### *Notes on the comparison of Matthew with Mark.*

- No. 1. That one borrowed from the other.
  2. That Mark borrowed from Matthew, rather than the converse.
  3. That Matthew borrowed from Mark, rather than the converse.
  4. Apparent arbitrary alterations by Mark.
  5. Amplifications, or exaggerations, upon Matthew's text.
  6. Independent information of Mark.
  7. Passages which appear to be omitted by Mark, rather than added by Matthew in the use by the one of the other's gospel.
  8. That Mark used a Hebrew copy of Matthew.
  9. That he used the present Greek copy.
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In the accounts of John the Baptist, Mark's appears to be that of one who had read or heard Matthew's often enough to be well acquainted with it, although he could not repeat the whole verbatim. Hence most of the verses in Mark agree with separate ones in Matthew, although in a different order.

- No. 2. The only thing additional in Mark is a quotation from Malachi, "Behold, I send my messenger," &c. It is very likely that Mark having heard this prophecy applied to John elsewhere, should think it worth while to add it to the one from Isaiah quoted by Matthew. But it is unlikely that Matthew, who was so intent upon the prophecies, should omit this, if he found it ready prepared for him.



No. 2, 7. Mark omits the reproof of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "O generation of vipers." Throughout his Gospel he appears to dislike copying long discourses, and this reproof of two Jewish sects would seem to him the part least interesting to his own readers. He passes on to the most important part, the promise of the one mightier.

If Matthew had been copying from Mark, he would probably have also put this important part first, and the reproof would have followed or stood isolated; but it not only comes first, but coheres well with the parts before, ver. 6, and after, verses 11, 12. The more important thus grows out of the less important. To interweave the reproof in this apparently original manner upon Mark's narrative, implies more art than it is reasonable to attribute to Matthew, who could have no motive for taking so much pains here; whereas Mark's account is a very natural abridgment of Matthew's.

7. Mark omits the addition to the baptism with the Holy Ghost, "and with fire;" also the threat of unquenchable fire. In Matthew they form an easy continuation of ver. 10.
7. The dialogue between Jesus and John, in which the former says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," is not in Mark, whose motive for omitting it might have been an unwillingness to lay so much stress upon baptism before his Gentile readers.
- 2, 7. In the temptation, the discourses with the devil are omitted by Mark; but as he begins and ends with nearly the same phrases as Matthew, his account seems to be merely an abridgment of the latter. The only thing added by Mark is, "he was with the wild beasts," which might be merely an idea suggested by Matthew's word, "wilderness."
- 8? Mark calls the devil "Satan," instead of *διαβολος*, the word in Matthew. Still as the word Satan does occur in Matthew's dialogue, the instance is not of much force. The term Satan was no doubt as familiar to the Greek Christians as it is to us.
5. Mark i. 14, 15; his own paraphrase of Matt. iv. 12, 17, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel," is more suitable to Mark's own time, than to the beginning of Jesus's preaching.
- 1, 9. Mark i. 16—20.
5. Ibid. 19, 20: Going "a little further thence," and leaving Zebedee "with the hired servants," are very natural additions to Matthew. It might have occurred to Mark that Matthew's statement, "they left the ship and their father," sounded harshly.
7. Mark passes over the sermon on the Mount, but adopts Matthew's closing sentence, "They were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." This agrees with his usual disinclination to copy long discourses. He speaks of this teaching as being in the synagogue of Capernaum, instead of on a mountain; but as Matthew had previously mentioned Capernaum as Jesus's residence, iv. 13, this slight discrepancy

might arise from a negligent way of epitomizing rather than from independent information.

- No. 5. Mark i. 23—28, a story of casting out an unclean spirit, not in Matthew, but apparently suggested by Matt. iv. 24, "He healed those which were possessed with devils." For Mark's verse 28, compared with Matt. iv. 23, 25, renders it probable that he had this part of Matthew before him, or in his remembrance. The story expresses rather the general notions of the church concerning the power of Jesus over unclean spirits, than circumstances which indicate reality. There must have been many such stories current, and Mark seems here to relate one in order to give the general character of the cures mentioned by Matthew.

From this place to Matt. xiv. 1, Mark's order disagrees frequently with Matthew's, although separate parts and stories agree closely. This may be accounted for thus; many of Matthew's stories were generally known to the church from tradition, and consequently to Mark, who had besides the advantage of having heard Peter. At first, therefore, he did not intend to be a mere abridger of Matthew, but introduced the stories as he remembered them, or as seemed to him best, turning to Matthew only to help him out with the details of each. By this means he accustomed himself to depend upon Matthew, and, by the time he arrived at his sixth chapter, he found it the easiest plan to paraphrase or even copy him continuously; for Matthew's was a very full collection, and contained ready for use nearly all that he himself could say. But he still omitted or added in some places.

6. Mark i. 29. In the cure of Peter's mother-in-law, he mentions the house as that of Simon and Andrew, and that James and John were there, which has the appearance of independent information. But ver. 30, 31, 32, show so plainly his disposition to amplify, that it may be doubted whether Matthew's expression, "ministered unto them," did not suggest to him the propriety of naming the company, which he was able to do by conjecture from ver. 16, 19. Mark frequently appears anxious to fill up minute particulars, which most writers leave unnoticed, or to be imagined.
- 2, 7. He omits Matt. viii. 17, viz. the strange application of Isaiah liii. 4, to the cures of healing. Since Mark did not object to quote prophecy when there was an appearance of applicability, as in the case of John the Baptist, it seems probable that he omitted the above and many others quoted by Matthew, from his perception of the absurdity of bringing them forward as prophecies.
6. Mark i. 34. "Not suffering the devils to speak, because they knew him," is an idea not found in Matthew. It is repeated by Mark very forcibly, iii. 11, 12, and therefore seems more than an amplification made in the warmth of writing. It was probably a tradition current at Rome, the origin of which was this: The disciples observed, in these cases of cures, that the devils themselves generally

did not speak, which they might have been expected to do by way of complaint or protest on their ejection; they therefore supposed that Jesus prohibited them from speaking for the reason stated. The fact, that the devils did not speak, is one of those additional particulars which Mark, owing probably to his acquaintance with Peter, was able to supply.

No. 6. i. 35—38. Gathered from Peter's conversation.

1, 5. i. 40—45.

6. ii. 3. Because it was not worth while to add, "which was borne of four," for the mere sake of improving Matthew's account; and the latter suggests nothing concerning the number of bearers, which might have been two or three.

5. ii. 4. This breaking up of the roof is a strange incident. There appears throughout such an evident disposition on the part of Mark to render his story striking, that we may be allowed to conjecture that he ventured on this bold amplification merely for the sake of illustrating Matt. ver. 2, "Jesus seeing their faith." The omission by Matthew of such an incident, whilst noticing the faith of the bearers, would be remarkable."

1. ii. 5—22. The frame-work of the narrative agrees closely with Matthew: but ver. 13, 23, seem to show that Mark had heard of these events in a different order from Matthew.

4 or 6. In the story of the ears of corn, Mark adds, "In the days of Abiathar the high priest." Ver. 27, 28, also do not arise out of Matthew's account. The variations seem greater than would have been made by one merely paraphrasing Matthew.

1, 5. In the cure of the withered hand, the whole of Mark's account either agrees with or might have been suggested by Matthew's. He omits the comparison to the sheep in the pit, but enlarges in the other part. The wording of the cure, ver. 5, could not have agreed so closely from accident.

1, 5. iii. 6. Mark adds, "with the Herodians." He might have known from Matt. xxii. 16, that they were leagued with the Pharisees against Jesus.

Mark here, as is common for one writer using another, falls continually into Matthew's turn of narration and expressions. *Εξελθοντες* is a trifling particular; *κατ' αυτου* is unnecessary to the sense; *ὁπως αυτον απολεσωσι*, "how they might destroy him," is one out of an immense variety of phrases which might have been employed in so copious a language as the Greek: the same may be said of *συμβουλιον*; yet all these expressions are in both.

2. Matthew's construction is the harder in this verse.

5. iii. 7, 8. An exaggeration on Matt. xii. 15. How could Mark have known so precisely from what provinces the multitudes came? Matthew merely gives an obvious fact, that multitudes followed him.

6. iii. 21. This is not suggested by any expression in Matthew, nor is



it likely that Mark would have imagined a speech apparently so derogatory to Jesus.

No. 7. iii. 27, 28. Here the part omitted by Mark is the most unintelligible verse in Matthew's narrative, xii. 30. It is very improbable that any one, borrowing from Mark, could have inserted this verse.

#### PAGE 338.

From other sources besides Matthew, it appears to have been a current notion amongst the Jews that the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem. The Targum on Micah v. 1, reads, "From thee shall go forth before me Messias, to rule over Israel." The same text is cited in Pirke R. Eliezer, as relating to the Messiah. In the Mishna, Berachoth, 5, 1, there is a story about the birth of the Messiah, who is said to be Menahem, son of Hezekiah, born at Bethlehem.—See Schoettgen and Lightfoot.

If Jesus were really born at Bethlehem, the coincidence would be at least remarkable. But this fact rests only on the two accounts of Matthew and Luke, against which there are some strong objections.

In Matthew the birth at Bethlehem is part of the same story which contains the slaughter of the infants, the appearance of the star, and other most improbable circumstances. Moreover, he does not explain the occasion of Joseph's being so far from his usual dwelling-place, Nazareth.

Luke says that Joseph came up to Bethlehem to be taxed. Now, Josephus says that Cyrenius came into Judea "to take an account of the people's substance or estates," and he calls this a taxation; but he gives no intimation that the Jews were all required to go into their own cities. Such a wanton disturbance of the nation was very unlikely to be insisted on, when the purpose might be answered as well by a declaration given to the Roman officer.

Besides, if we admit the truth of Luke's subsequent statement, that Jesus was about thirty years old in the 15th year of Tiberius, he could not be born at the time of the taxing, but was then about eight years old; for, according to Josephus, the taxings were made 37 years after the battle of Actium, from which date it is agreed that Augustus reigned 44 years. Count, therefore, 30 years from the 15th of his successor Tiberius, and we find that Jesus must have been born 8 years before the taxing.

We can calculate the same thing another way. Herod died A.U.C. 750, or 751. Archelaus held the government ten years, according to Josephus, and it was only after his removal that Cyrenius came into Judea; the taxing, therefore, must have been in A.U.C. 760, or later. The 15th Tiberius falls in with A.U.C. 782. Deduct from this 30 years, and we have the 8th year before the taxing for the date of the birth of Jesus.

Unless, therefore, we suppose that Jesus was only 22 years old, or less, when Luke says he was *about* 30, Luke contradicts not only Matthew, but himself, in the circumstances which he connects with the birth at Bethlehem.

The eagerness of the early church to prove that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies relative to the Messiah being considered, it is probable, then,



that the stories of his birth at Bethlehem were invented in order to meet an early objection of the Jews, alluded to John vii. 42: "Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

## PAGES 413—425.

"*Jesus a revolutionist.*"—It may appear that in what has been said on this subject, there is a want of clearness in explaining what were the views of Jesus respecting the Roman power. The difficulty on this head is probably increased to modern readers from their having a more clear and impressive idea of that power than was held by the mass of the Jewish populace. The modern reader of history connects at once the idea of overwhelming military strength with the Roman name. But this was not so fully the case with each people, as they successively underwent the process of subjugation. The event alone could fully convince them that the Romans were irresistible. The Jewish populace especially, from their blindness to what passed in the rest of the world, were likely to fall short in their estimate of Roman strength. A few legions and garrisons, better armed and disciplined than themselves, were all that appeared visibly before them; and why should not these be expelled by a whole nation? The geography and statistics of the lower Jews were not sufficient to enable them to appreciate the colossal power by which those few legions would sooner or later be supported. An Agrippa was seldom at hand to give them a minute detail of Roman conquests. The inertness of their own rulers, high priests, scribes and Pharisees, chiefly excited their indignation.

Yet it must be admitted that the legions of the procurator formed an obstacle too prominent to be overlooked by any Jew who desired the national deliverance; and if Jesus ever allowed himself to dwell upon the *means* by which that deliverance was to be effected, the mode of expulsion of those legions must have frequently been a subject of thought. Allowing that he hoped for supernatural assistance, did he rely upon it to such an extent as to render all efforts of the Jewish population superfluous, or did he expect it only as an impulse to a gallant and successful insurrection like that of Judas Maccabæus?

It is difficult to form a precise opinion on this point, because

Firstly: It is probable that Jesus never did clearly define, even in his own mind, the precise nature of the *means* by which the kingdom was to be introduced. A cool Jewish politician or warrior would have immediately seen that the first and most important business was to get rid of the Roman incubus; from such an individual we should justly look for copious indications of his intentions in this respect. But these features, as we have seen, were but in a small degree ingredients in the character of Jesus. His disposition inclined him rather to be the teacher and prophet of his nation, and to invoke the arm of the Lord, than to organize arms of flesh. The Scriptures taught that the God of Israel was omnipotent, and that whenever his people's sufferings and repentance had arrived at the predetermined degree,

he had specially interfered to deliver them. Pilate could no more resist Jehovah than could Pharaoh, Chushan-rishathaim, or Sennacherib. To persuade their God to stretch forth his arm was the shortest way to deliverance. Repentance and prayer of the whole nation were the most direct and effectual means of attaining freedom. The nation's hardness of heart was the main difficulty; the Roman power a secondary one. Making full allowance for this strong peculiarity in Jewish thought at the time of Christ, (and few readers of the New Testament probably allow for it sufficiently,) it does not appear inconsistent with that degree of intellect and mental acuteness which appears in the conduct of Jesus in many parts of his story, that he should have embarked in a career involving his own fate and that of his followers, without a careful consideration of that which, to ordinary and modern calculation, would form the most essential matter to be provided for.

Secondly: Admitting that Jesus might have thought over at times the means by which his Father would choose to expel the Romans, he never arrived at such a point as to require the public manifestation of his thoughts. Considered politically, he failed at the outset. The first part of the plan must be to call the whole nation to repentance, and to obtain some demonstration or promise of adherence to himself; when the whole nation should appear in the requisite temper in these respects, it would be time enough to announce what further steps were necessary to restore the throne of David. But he found himself unsupported except by hungry multitudes; the preliminary preaching of preparation alone, in an extensive and organized manner, brought upon him disgrace and proscription from the Jewish authorities. His thoughts then, whatever they were, respecting the ulterior object of expelling the Romans, remained chiefly in his own breast; and it is almost out of the province of reasonable criticism to attempt to define them accurately.

Looking however at the indications which we can gather from his discourses and acts, I am inclined to conjecture that there was some fluctuation in his thoughts upon this point, according to the different circumstances in which he was placed; that he did not set out with the intention of forming the Jewish population into armies, and of occupying the towns as a military leader; he trusted that the faith which could remove a mountain into the sea, would supersede the necessity for military tactics; but that when he found superhuman aid wanting, he would gladly have availed himself of a general armed rising of the nation, and occasionally even gave some obscure hints that this might be necessary to attain the Kingdom of God.

Let us go through the four Evangelists to collect all traces of information on this point:

Matthew x. 32. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34. Think not that I came to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the

daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. 38. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 36. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

The discourse from which this passage is taken evidently contains a large mixture of matter applicable to the history of the church after the death of Jesus till the writer's own time, viz. the allusion to the distresses which the followers of Christ should undergo, in terms pointing apparently beyond the earlier annoyance from Jewish authorities, to the persecution by Nero; also the expectation of an approaching end bringing salvation to the followers of Christ, and of the coming of the Son of Man,—which notions we have seen reason to consider most prevalent among the Jewish Christians about the time of the siege. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that this long discourse in Matthew presents us with some original sayings of Jesus liberally intermingled with more recent views. But some parts bear a strong character of genuineness; for instance, ver. 5—15; and ought we to attribute the same character to the passage under consideration? This must be determined mainly by weighing its intrinsic applicability to the different periods.

Ver. 32, 33,—more applicable to the later period; because it was then reckoned by the church the prime merit of a Christian to confess Jesus before men, that is, to proclaim him the Messiah, at the risk of martyrdom; but at the time when Jesus gave his charge to the apostles, and even during the greater part of his life, it was the very thing he was most anxious they should not do. A few chapters further on, we find Matthew himself stating that "he commanded them to tell no man that he was the Christ." As the whole stands, the disciples are first promised eternal rewards if they will do what they are shortly afterwards strictly enjoined not to do. Nor can it be said that Jesus is here carrying his views forward into futurity, for no such transition is marked: he begins evidently with directions for their immediate conduct; and if he had really spoken the whole chapter as it stands, the disciples could not have been expected to distinguish one kind of directions from the other, and after hearing from verse 5 to 33 continuously, they certainly could not have been justly blamed if they had committed the important mistake of confessing to all Judea that Jesus was the Christ. The omission to mark the transition would thus have been a grievous error on the part of Jesus, but on the part of the writer 40 years later, it was comparatively unimportant, and agrees with his ascertained carelessness. It is true that the inconsistency would be avoided by attributing another sense to the term "confession;" one consistent with the actual position of Jesus, viz. a confession that he was a greater prophet than John; but from his cautious conduct at that time with respect to the authorities, it seems very doubtful whether he would have desired even this: and considering the verses in reference to the continuous exhortation from ver. 16, with which the word "therefore" appears intended to connect them, it is more natural to consider that the confession of Jesus, on which so much stress is laid,—the



confession to be given "before governors and kings, for a testimony against them and the *Gentiles*,"—is the confession of his most exalted character.

Ver. 34 does not link itself with the preceding, but appears rather to begin a distinct subject. The whole from 34 to 39 undoubtedly expresses very well and powerfully the necessity of preparation even for civil warfare in the cause undertaken—an exhortation to conquer or die, and a promise of eternal reward to those who fall. If it had proceeded from Mahomet, no one would hesitate to attribute this character to it; we should say perhaps that this passage described very aptly the views of the Arabian warrior-prophet. The uniformly pacific disposition of Jesus throughout his career is not so indisputably established as to lead us to banish without examination such an explanation of the passage regarded as proceeding from him. If really uttered by him, in substance at least, during his circuit through Galilee, whilst he was inducing multitudes to leave their occupations and follow him, it is difficult to avoid an interpretation of this kind. Certainly his Galilean hearers would have required a very careful and explicit commentary to preserve them from it. For the Galileans were notoriously impatient of the Roman yoke; from the time of Judas the Gaulonite they had been most prone to insurrection, and preserved this reputation till the extinction of the Jewish state. The brave defenders of the Galilean towns against Vespasian would probably have considered the language of Jesus as that of a man worthy to lead them; and his actual hearers partook sufficiently of their temper to be inclined to consider it as a significant hint. It is complimenting the peaceful intent of Jesus at the expense of his understanding, to suppose that he threw fire-brands upon inflammable matter, without at all intending to raise a conflagration.

The passage, however, expresses rather the melancholy desperation of one forced into a course to which he would be naturally averse, than the ready ardour of a military spirit.

This verse (34) is not linked with the preceding either by the expression or the sense; and does not appear very applicable to the later period. The dissensions which had torn Judea for some time before Matthew wrote, were not caused by Jesus. He was so far from sending the sword, either of the Romans, or of the Jewish zealots, that there are good grounds for believing that his followers were at that period among the more peaceably inclined. A writer of the sect would not have volunteered a text apparently so contradictory to the spiritual character which then began to be the more prevalent attribute of Christ's kingdom.

It is true that at the time referred to, the Christian church very generally expected an approaching end of all existing kingdoms, and the appearance of the Lord to avenge his saints. But the verse does not express this with any thing approaching the significance which would probably have been infused into it by one intending to indicate such an extraordinary kind of interposition. The terms "peace" and a "sword," both in themselves, and in connexion with the following verses, seem most obviously to signify ordinary peace, and common civil warfare.

On the other hand, considered as spoken by Jesus at some part of the



time when he was endeavouring to rouse the towns of Galilee to preparation for the kingdom, the verse has a very intelligible sense. It had been said of the Messiah, that he was to bring peace and plenty to Israel; their progress hitherto had shown that this was not to be attained without a preliminary struggle; the disciples must not lull themselves with the hope of an easy acquisition of the blessings of the Christ's reign, but must be prepared even for civil warfare in order to attain it.

Ver. 35, 36, by themselves, might apply very well to religious family dissensions, which the progress of a new sect must often occasion. But they also apply to a state of civil warfare, and as they are connected with the preceding verse, the sense given to it must determine the sense of these also. Some members of the family of Jesus himself rejected him. From Matt. xix. 29, Luke ix. 61, which bear a strong character of genuineness, it is undeniable that the attempt to follow Jesus occasioned many of his disciples to be rejected by their kindred. The strong similarity of all these passages contributes to identify a common source, viz. Jesus himself; and thus ver. 34 would become the exponent of these two following ones.

It is true that ver. 21 much resembles 35, but it occurs in the midst of the description of the subsequent persecutions, and the term "delivering up" increases its applicability to those times.

Ver. 37 might apply to either time, but yet much better to that of Jesus. The profession of his religion in after times did not so necessarily imply the forsaking of kindred, as the following himself in person. Paul was favourable to the continued union of believers and unbelievers of the same family. 1 Cor. vii. 16.

Ver. 38, 39, in the main, apply better to the time of Jesus: for they imply the necessity of immediate action, and imminent dangerous enterprise, rather than that passive firmness which is most appropriate to an obnoxious religious sect. The phrase "taketh not his cross" may be the writer's own form of expressing the risk which Jesus was announcing, and may thus include some modification from his own knowledge of the event; yet there is not an insuperable objection to considering them as literally genuine, since crucifixion was known to be the common fate of persons unsuccessful in attempting innovations.

In Mark there is nothing corresponding to ver. 34 of Matthew. We have seen that Mark in many instances omits sayings which, although bearing strongly the character of authenticity, had become unsuitable to his time and readers.

In Luke we find it so far modified, and in such a different connexion, as to lead us to think that he does not here borrow from Matthew, but records it as he obtained it from some one of the other sources which supplied him with materials.

Luke xii. 49, "I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled? 50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished! 51. Suppose ye that I am

come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division. 52. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53. The father shall be divided against the son, &c."

These verses have the appearance of one of those collections of fragmentary sayings, which Luke places together merely in consequence of some imaginary association. Ver. 49 appears to be the relic, possibly a corrupted one, of some saying resembling ver. 34 Matt.; but when Luke wrote, the original meaning was probably lost in the Gentile churches, and consequently he inserts it without having himself a clear perception of its sense. By itself, it would perhaps appear too obscure to found any reasoning upon; but since Luke places it so near to ver. 51, plainly the parallel of Matt. 34, we have some ground for taking this latter to illustrate it. The two places then agree very well. To send fire on the earth is a very appropriate description of the introduction of civil warfare: *τι θελω ει ηδη ανηφθη* appears to express regret and desperation; the original saying might have signified, "What course must now be pursued, if the preaching throughout Galilee have already kindled an insurrection, and compromised us irretrievably with the earthly powers? Shall I, who had hitherto relied on divine aid, now attempt to avail myself of this earthly means alone?"

It is not likely that the church should have gratuitously invented a saying so much at variance with the peaceful and spiritual character which belonged to it in subsequent times. Also *ει ηδη* expresses something expected by the speaker to happen or to have happened in his own time. These are additional reasons for regarding the saying as coming, in substance, from Jesus himself; and as such, it hardly appears susceptible of any other sense than the one referred to. His moral teaching and his sayings in general, when uninfluenced by some pressing emergency, are in favour of peace and good-will. It would be extravagant to attribute to Jesus the detestable design of infusing into men in general a spirit of dissension. But reasons have been shown for supposing that he aimed at attaining the throne of Israel, and delivering his country, to which end a temporary "fire" or "sword" might, against his will, be found to be the only means.

Thus Luke not only confirms the remarkable verse in Matthew, but places near it another, apparently independent, but, as far as we can understand it, agreeing with it in sense.

Ver. 50, it is true, has no connexion with the preceding one, interpreted in this manner; but does not Luke's general method of compilation authorize the conjecture that he judged this a fit place for inserting this second fragmentary verse, merely because the "fire sent on earth" appeared to him a parallel idea to the "baptism of fire" instead of water, which Jesus was said to bring, and consequently as naturally suggesting any remarkable saying of Jesus respecting his baptism?

The entrance into Jerusalem approaches very nearly to actual revolt. Since Jesus appears to encourage the multitude as far as lies in his power, we must conclude, that if this movement did not terminate in armed insur-

rection, it was owing only to the prompt vigilance of the chief priests and Pharisees. These authorities are keenly reproached by Jesus himself, and the people threatened with the loss of the kingdom of God on account of their rejection of him.

Matt. xxiii. 13: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." A political sense is here the most clear and intelligible. The saying is placed soon after the account of the repression, by the Pharisees, of the incipient insurrection, and thus appears to mean, "Ye Pharisees will neither aid yourselves in that national deliverance, the introduction to the kingdom of heaven, of which I come to bring the signal, nor allow free course to the efforts of these truer sons of Israel, whom my voice had begun to rouse." That the Pharisees hindered men's souls from reaching the eternal happy state, in consequence of the false doctrines taught by them, is too strained and figurative an interpretation to be admitted without strong support from the context, corresponding passages, or connected events. The expression is not "heaven," but the 'kingdom of heaven,' i.e. indisputably "the kingdom of the Messiah;" and how did the Pharisees in fact hinder men from entering into it? Most obviously, by their conduct just related, their suppression of the popular enthusiasm, and determined maintenance of the actual state of things.

When Jesus is apprehended, the disciples appear disposed to defend him by force: but he represses the attempt; "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." This disclaimer, however of the use of military weapons at that moment, when it could only involve the disciples in his own fate, by no means proves that he would have held the same language on all other occasions. The moment for effective resistance was then past; the attempt must evidently accelerate his own fate, and sacrifice them.

In the parables of Jesus, kings and armies are not unfrequently introduced, and sometimes in such a manner as to sanction rather than condemn their ordinary employments. Matt. xxii. 7; Luke xiv. 31; xix. 27. If he represented the righteous and triumphant king as slaying his enemies, we can hardly suppose that he would have disapproved of the slaying of some Romans and recusant Jews, in order to attain the triumph.

These indications are, I think, sufficient to authorize the conjecture, that although Jesus intended at first, and entertained most ardently the desire, to be the leader of the people to general righteousness and repentance, trusting to the divine arm for deliverance;—yet the position into which after some time he found himself drawn by his undertaking, led him to desire earnestly the aid of his countrymen in any way by which it could be rendered effective.

Yet admitting, in its fullest extent, the semi-bellicose aspect which this view affixes to Jesus, we are not thereby compelled to withdraw the epithets of wise or virtuous, which we might have felt disposed to attribute to him in reference to his predominant character of moral teacher. That he enter-

tained the idea of freeing his country from a hateful foreign yoke, when other means failed, by exciting to a gallant and unanimous resistance, would probably raise him in most eyes more than a demeanour invariably answering to the description "the meek and lowly Jesus."

THE END.



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## CHRISTIAN THEISM,

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"AN INQUIRY CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY."

T. ALLMAN, 42, HOLBORN HILL.

"The following are some reflections on the direction which the religious sentiments of men may be expected to take after the relinquishment of their belief in miraculous revelations. On some occasions old truths have an interest and fitness of application which give them a freshness equal to that of novelty. . . . To those who have felt compelled to acquiesce in the conclusion referred to with respect to the Christian religion, the truths which can be gathered from Nature come to have a force and reality which were never before perceived. When we are called upon to decide between Nature's religion and none, it seems to us as if we had not yet sufficiently weighed the import of the lessons conveyed in Creation, and we find in them the interest and value belonging to new discoveries."—*Preface.*



*Charlotte M. Barnes*  
*New York Dec.*  
*1846*

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L O N D O N :

T. ALLMAN, 42, HOLBORN HILL;  
JOHN CHAPMAN, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

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1845.





## PREFACE.

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THE following are some reflections on the direction which the religious sentiments of men may be expected to take after the relinquishment of their belief in miraculous revelations.

On some occasions old truths have an interest and fitness of application which give them a freshness equal to that of novelty. This must be the excuse for repeating here some things which may have often been said before. To those who have felt compelled to acquiesce in the conclusion referred to with respect to the Christian religion, the truths which can be gathered from Nature come to have a force and a reality which were never before perceived. When we are called upon to decide between Nature's religion and none, it seems to us as if we had not yet sufficiently weighed the import of the lessons conveyed in Creation, and we find in them the interest and value belonging to new discoveries.

These pages may, perhaps, express some of the thoughts to which such a position gives rise ; and also tend to shew in what sense Judaism and Christianity may unite in name as well as in sympathies.

ERRATUM.

Page 2, line 1, for "other causes than those" read "those causes alone."

## CHRISTIAN THEISM.

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MIRACLE and prophecy are losing their influence over the minds of men; they are no longer put forward as the impregnable bulwarks of religion, but are withdrawn to a more secure place in the background. Their strength as armour is mistrusted; and they are preserved with the jealous care due to venerated but fragile relics. The tone of confident appeal to the supposed unimpeachable evidence on their behalf, is succeeded by an imploring deprecation of the rashness which should root up a belief on the whole beneficial, or by a discreet silence. The imagination may still linger over the ancient and pleasing fictions, so long intertwined with the religious feelings of all the nations who have drawn their creeds from Palestine; but calm reason is unable to acknowledge them longer as facts. A dispassionate examination persuades us that there is no sufficient ground for believing that that land, more than others, has witnessed interruptions or suspensions of the laws of nature: the closest investigation fails to support the wondrous tales, the power of which over the imagination and heart was enhanced by the solemnity of religious sanction: we recognize with some disappointment, that although men in every land have been liable to mistake, exaggerate, or deceive, the sun and moon have, in all probability, ever pursued their regular course over the valleys of Judea; that attraction of gravitation has probably never ceased to operate on the sea of Galilee; nor the human frame, in the region from Idumea to Tyre and Sidon, to be affected by

other causes than those which fall within the limits of the physical and organic laws of nature.

Yet, after having arrived at this result, the inquirer presently sees the horizon begin to clear, and many difficulties which had hitherto enveloped religion break up and disperse. Subjects most interesting to mankind no longer appear clogged with absurdities, which the utmost ingenuity of scholarship could not reduce into a shape admissible before reason; the progress of moral science is no longer impeded by the necessity of accommodating conclusions to a collection of written precepts; nor the supply of mental strength made dependent on the reception of tales of the most difficult verification. At the same time, whatever of real moral value was contained in Christianity and its records may be retained; nor does the important modification of opinions alluded to, appear even to bring with it the necessity of running counter to the feelings of this age and country by a renunciation of the Christian name. It must rejoice the lover of peace as well as of truth, to feel convinced that there is no inconsistency in retaining a name in favour of which there are such strong, and on many accounts deserved, prepossessions, amongst the mass of his countrymen and benevolent men of every clime; and that this minor point need not contribute to a separation in feeling and action, which the difference of opinion alone would not have occasioned.

Even those more liberal Christians, who have been willing to admit that many different opinions might co-exist within the pale of Christianity, have generally taken it for granted that a belief in its miraculous origin at least was essential. But a close attention to the history of Jesus Christ will shew that this distinction is perfectly arbitrary; and that a total disbelief of miracles and prophecy no more disqualifies a man for bearing with propriety and consistency the Christian name, than any other deduction from the exuberant belief which places



him in the Triune Godhead. The most striking points in Christ's career and preaching shew, that contribution to human improvement constitutes the most prominent title to the name of Christian, regarded merely in an etymological and historical sense; and that, if the benevolent Deist feels inclined to honour the Jewish reformer by perpetuating his name in this honourable connexion with philanthropy, he may do so without even historical inaccuracy.

By some the essence of Christianity has been supposed to consist in the acknowledgment of Jesus as God, or the Son of God; by others, in looking to his death as an atonement for the sins of the world; by others, in the belief that he was raised from the dead, or that he was a man approved of God by miracles, wonders, and signs;—in all which views, men appear to have been more regardful of what was said by the followers of Christ, immediate or subsequent, than of that which formed his own main purpose during his life.

The earliest and original doctrine of Christianity, the feature which characterized the infant religion at its birth, that which John the Baptist preached even before Jesus came, which Jesus himself made the chief topic of almost every discourse, and which he bade his followers proclaim in every town from Galilee to Jerusalem, accords with the views of every benevolent man. Prepare for the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven approaches. Pray that the reign of God may come *on earth* as it is in heaven.

Amidst the many evils which disfigure the present aspect of mankind, men find a satisfaction in turning to the beautiful imaginary picture of a state of human innocence and perfection. To the frequent manifestations of the lower feelings which must occur during an imperfect state of human nature, a pleasing contrast is presented by the contemplation of a period, when all the noxious

features of the human character shall have disappeared, and the face of society shall present a rich moral landscape of virtue and happiness. This contemplation is the more natural, inasmuch as the moral world seems hitherto evidently behind the natural in point of perfection. The one seems to be nearer than the other to the perfection of which its nature admits. All the different views of nature contain something to please us; the corn field, the meadow, or the deep blue sea, may have more of tranquil beauty; yet even the wild heath, the barren desert, the storm, and the volcano, gratify our sense of the vast and sublime. But in much of the moral world, in the insincerity, meanness, and hard unscrupulous selfishness, which prevail to a great extent, there is nothing to gratify any perceptions within us; and we are tempted to inquire if both proceeded from the same creator, or if he was here less able to repel the encroachments of Arimanes than in physical nature. Nevertheless, amidst all the deformity of which we complain, enough of beauty is seen to persuade us that both kinds of creation proceed from a source in which benevolence at least was preponderant; and we recognize the impress of the same God in the star and hill, and in the body and mind of man. Hence the disproportion which strikes us, in the apparent amount of evil in the two creations, suggests, that the moral world does not at present exhibit the entire plan which the Creator had in view in its formation; that it has either fallen from the perfect state in which it issued from his hand, or not yet arrived at that full growth which he contemplated as its ultimate destination.

The moral sentiments having existed in some degree in all ages and countries, whilst unfortunately there has never been wanting a sufficient quantity of violence and fraud to shock them, these thoughts have appeared in different forms amongst many nations, but generally under one or other of those referred to, viz. a state of

perfection already past, or one which is yet to come; a golden age at the beginning, or one at the end of the world.

The idea appears in some parts of the poetical writings of the Jews, called the Prophets, who represent the imagined state of happiness as still to come, and to be revealed in the times of the end, or in the day of the Lord. The representations of it in these writings are more interesting to us than any others, because from them are derived principally those ideas and doctrines which, although now owing to a long series of modifications their identity is hardly to be recognized, have exercised under the name of Christianity such an important influence over mankind. Let us, then, recall the views on this subject of those whom Christ and the apostles quoted as high authorities, the Jewish prophets.

The book of Isaiah frequently represents that it will be the peculiar distinction of Jacob, to spread the knowledge of his God and peace throughout the earth.

Ch. ii. 2—4: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Speaking of the future king of the stem of Jesse, who is to restore the peace and glory of Israel, he says, that in his days,

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp.



and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Chap. xi. 6—9.

In the magnificent description of Israel's future glory, chap. lx. all the other nations of the earth are to derive enlightenment from the favoured nation.

Isaiah lx. 1—3: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, for behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Chap. lxi. 11: "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

In the vision of Daniel, the last kingdom of the saints of the Most High is to extend over the whole earth.

Dan. vii. 13, 14: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Micah, after lamenting the vices and sufferings of Israel in his own time, repeats the splendid anticipation of Isaiah concerning the last days.

Mic. iv. 3, 4: ".....nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it."

The sentiments in the other prophets, and even in some parts of those here quoted, are much inferior to the above; and in general it must be allowed that the most exalted Jewish ideas, respecting the earth's expected improvement, were mingled with a large mass of mere



national prejudice and vanity. The kingdom of God was hardly contemplated with so much satisfaction as being the universal reign of righteousness, as for the sake of that triumphant empire which Jacob should then assert over the nations that had oppressed him, and that glorious sceptre which David's great successor should sway over the whole earth. If the nations were to be brought to righteousness, it was to be by means of the law proceeding from Zion. If in the day of the Lord the Gentiles were to rejoice in the light of the Holy One of Israel, the same day was to behold the confusion of his adversaries, and to be a day of the Lord's vengeance on behalf of Israel. Nevertheless, the sublimity of the views to which these writings occasionally reach, may lead us to overlook the Jewish prejudices with which they abound, and in some degree, to join in the estimation in which they have so long been held.

Jesus Christ learned from the prophets the idea of a future state of perfection on earth, called the Kingdom of heaven, improved it from the resources of his own higher moral nature, and brought all the powers of a fertile eastern imagination to illustrate it so as to awaken the enthusiasm of his hearers. He delighted to portray the kingdom in a variety of forms, and with the imagery naturally proceeding from Jewish habits of thought. The multitudes listened with delight to discourses which for a moment raised their minds to ideas above their usual level, and to views of which the grandeur was probably augmented by not being clearly defined. Many of every class, from the Galilean fisherman to the member of the Sanhedrim, loved to hear the prophet of Nazareth expatiate on his favourite theme, and looked for the approach of that Kingdom in which the will of God should be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The following is a recapitulation of the principal texts in the four Gospels referring to the Kingdom of heaven:—

Matt. iii. 2: John the Baptist preaches repentance, as a preparation for the kingdom. iv. 17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." v. 3—12: Humility, mercifulness, and patience in suffering, necessary in order to attain the kingdom. Ver. 19, 20: Doing and teaching his commandments confer greatness in the kingdom. Greater righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees necessary. vi. 10: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." vi. 33: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." vii. 21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." viii. 11, 12: "Many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." ix. 35: Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and heals diseases, in many cities and villages. x. 7: Appoints twelve apostles to preach the kingdom through the cities of Israel. xi. 11: "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist." Ver. 12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." xii. 28: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." xiii.: Parable of the sower. Perseverance in the midst of temptations necessary to attain the kingdom. The multitude does not understand its mysteries. The kingdom of heaven likened to the field of good seed and tares; in the end of the world the wicked shall be cast into a furnace of fire, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Like to a grain of mustard-seed;—to leaven;—to a treasure hid in a field;—to a pearl of great price;—to a net gathering of every kind; at the end of the world the wicked shall be separated from the just. xvi. 19: The keys of the kingdom promised to Peter. Ver. 28: "Some here shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." xviii. 2—4: To be humble as little children qualifies for the kingdom. Ver. 23—35: In the kingdom of heaven there will be a reckoning, and those who have shewn mercy will obtain it. xix. 12: "Some eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive the saying, let him receive it." Ver. 23: "A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven." Ver. 28: Promise of twelve thrones to the apostles, in the regeneration. xx. 1—16: Parable of the vineyard; the last labourers made equal to the first. 20—28: Jesus rebukes Zebedee's children, who sought places of distinction in his kingdom. xxi. 1—11: Rides into Jerusalem, as the predicted lowly King of Zion. Ver. 31: "The publicans and harlots go into the

kingdom before" the chief priests and elders. Ver. 43: Those who reject the Messiah, threatened that the kingdom shall be given to others. xxii. 1—14: The kingdom like a marriage feast; the guests refusing to come, and murdering the king's servants, he destroys them, and invites others. xxiii. 13: "The Scribes and Pharisees shut up the kingdom against men." xxiv. 14: "The gospel of the kingdom to be preached in all the world, and then the end shall come." xxv.: Parable of the ten virgins. The kingdom will be revealed unexpectedly. The Lord will require increase for his talents. The Son of man, sitting on the throne of his glory, will divide men into the two classes of righteous and wicked. xxvi. 29: Jesus will not drink wine again until he drinks it new in his Father's kingdom. Ver. 64: Jesus tells the high priest, "the Son of man will be seen hereafter sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

The texts in Mark and Luke, merely corresponding with those in Matthew, are omitted.

Mark i. 15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." 26—29: The kingdom like seed growing secretly to a full harvest. xii. 34: The Scribe who loved God and his neighbour, not far from the kingdom of God. xv. 43: Joseph of Arimathea, one of those who "waited for the kingdom of God."

Luke i. 33: The child Jesus "shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." iv. 43: Jesus says, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent." ix. 62: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." xii. 32: It is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom to the little flock of disciples. xiv. 15: A guest exclaims, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Jesus answers by the parable of the supper, of which the poor and blind and lame were brought to partake, instead of those first invited. xvii. 20, 21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there; for behold the kingdom of God is within (among) you." xix. 11: On arriving at Jerusalem, the disciples thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear. Parable of the nobleman who was rejected by his citizens, obtains a kingdom elsewhere, and returns to reckon with his servants, and take vengeance on his enemies. xxi. 31: When Jerusalem is trodden down, and signs appear in the heavens, the kingdom of God will be nigh. xxiii. 42: The malefactor says to Jesus, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom."

John i. 49: "Nathanael saith, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou



art the King of Israel." iii. 3: Jesus says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Ver. 5: "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." xviii. 36: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."\*

Jesus made *virtue* the chief qualification for partaking of the kingdom of heaven. To love God and one's neighbour, was to be not far from the kingdom of God. And he laid particular stress on virtues of the meek and benevolent kind. Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth.....Blessed are the *peace-makers*, for they shall be called the children of God..... Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those who in spirit are like little children, rather than the contenders for greatness, are fit for the kingdom of God. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another." "Love your enemies." In all this, Jesus accords strikingly with the most advanced morality of the present age, which admits that the prevalence of these dispositions is the most essential requisite to the improvement of the world.

Moreover, although Jesus seems to have held the common Jewish notion of the exaltation of Israel, there are indications that, in his view, the righteous throughout the world would be partakers of the kingdom. In the parable of the tares, the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom.—Mat. xiii. 38. The kingdom is like a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind. Ver. 47.†

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\* The probability of some interpolations of later views, acquired by the church after the fall of Jerusalem, with the sayings of Jesus himself, especially in the last Gospel, is considered, ch. vi. and xvi., of "An Inquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity."

† There is much difficulty in distinguishing accurately the



These excellent and enlightened views are enough to secure to Jesus the permanent respect of moralists, although it be admitted that he added to them some notions peculiarly Jewish, or of inferior merit.

Jesus Christ, after a very short career, was put to death, a victim to the political suspicions which he had excited; and the state of things, which he had announced, was found not to be near at hand. His followers continued for a time to expect a kingdom of heaven, to be revealed in some extraordinary manner. Experience and reason have long set aside this expectation as chimerical; but at the same time they convince us, that the tendency of the world is actually towards the realization of the conception described, a state of happiness and perfection on earth; and that the proper means of bringing it to pass, are human efforts in the cause of charity and knowledge. Thus the labourers in this cause are the only real fulfillers of the intention of Jesus. They are in effect bringing about that which Jewish imagination called Messiah's reign; they are obeying in the most efficient manner Christ's most urgent command; and may therefore with peculiar propriety be called after that name, which, in reference to the future kingdom, was assumed by him.

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Undoubtedly, the views of Jesus were in some respects very different from those of the modern moralist. The expectation of a miraculous introduction of the kingdom,\* and of his own exaltation as Messiah, naturally gave to

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views of Jesus himself on this point, both from a probable modification in his own teaching, after the arrival at Jerusalem and the non-acknowledgment of his Messiahship by the Jews; and from the probable introduction of the more enlarged views of the church after the admission of the Gentiles. See some reflections on this subject, 16th chap. of "An Inquiry," &c.

\* This subject is considered, ch. xvi. of "An Inquiry," &c.

his teaching a general tendency to excitement and to a disregard of the common engagements of life.\* With every allowance too for eastern style, it may be questioned if the virtues of humility and reliance upon providence† are not enforced to an extent inconsistent with self-respect, prudence, and energy of character. There is a general depreciation of the common enjoyments of earth; poverty and suffering seem to be held up as actually desirable, in preference to a happy earthly life, for the sake of obtaining a better title to a future reward.‡ This future reward, whether in the kingdom about to be revealed, or in an unseen state in heaven, is urged as the proper object of men's constant thought and desire.§ The duty of self-denial seems to be inculcated to an extent|| more consistent with the spirit of monachism,

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\* His hearers are repeatedly commanded to forsake their kindred and occupations in order to follow him. He says to the multitudes, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all he hath, he cannot be my disciple:" Luke xiv. 25—33. The young man, who had kept the commandments, and was apparently making good use of his riches, is commanded, "if he will be perfect, to sell what he has and give to the poor, and to follow him:" Matt. xix. 18—22. Marriage is not prohibited, but it is desirable for those who seek the kingdom of heaven to abstain from it. Matt. xix. 10—12.

† Matt. v. 38—41; vi. 25—34. By comparing these precepts with some similar rabbinical proverbs in use among the Jews about the time of Christ, it appears unlikely that he intended them to be understood in that merely figurative sense which modern commentators usually affix to them. See Inquiry, ch. xvii. pp. 341—348.

‡ Luke vi. 20—26. Blessed be ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled, &c.... But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation, &c. In the parable of Lazarus, Abraham appears to represent to the rich man, that he is tormented because he had received good things in his life-time, not because he had misused those good things: Luke xvi. 25.

§ Matt. vi. 19—21.

|| Matt. xvi. 24—26; Luke ix. 23—25.

than with that cheerful morality which would enlarge, rather than restrict, the bounds of innocent enjoyment. It seems not unlikely that Jesus, notwithstanding his general intellectual superiority and more liberal nature, had not entirely lost that estimation of monastic austerity and excessive heavenly-mindedness, which characterized the whole body of the Essenes. Hence those individuals or sects, in the Christian world, who have striven to attain a close conformity to the *whole* of the precepts of Jesus, have usually found themselves in a singular or isolated position with respect to the society around them, whose less stringent faith impeded but slightly the operation of natural reason and feeling. For these reasons, it is possible that the precepts of the Gospels may not appear a complete and safe code of morality to the philanthropist or legislator who deems, that the appointed chief object of human effort is the increase of happiness and improvement upon this earth.

It is true also, that the doctrine to which we have referred, soon ceased to be the most conspicuous feature in the early church. The followers of Jesus, after some time, thought it of more consequence to assert the resurrection and apotheosis of their lost master, and the eternal reward prepared for his disciples, than to adhere to his own most prominent doctrine. The expectation held by Jesus of an approaching speedy fulfilment of his anticipations, would not lead him to enjoin the proclamation of these anticipations as the permanent distinguishing doctrine of his followers; and they were naturally led to adopt as their leading tenets those which the progress of events and opinions rendered most interesting.

It may be asked why, on this hypothesis of imperfect views and mixed motives on the part of the Founder of Christianity, this age should be inclined to render him any allegiance whatever, and to connect his name more than those of many other reformers, possibly more wise



and enlightened, with the cause of human improvement? If he were not God, nor the Son of God, nor a prophet, not even the wisest philosopher, or most perfect moral being that we can conceive of; if he were, in fact, only a Jewish peasant of intellect, imagination, and moral feeling, much, although not immeasurably, above the standard of his age and country; why should his name be enshrined in this costly manner more than those of many other philanthropists, which would now be scarcely recognized by any but the students of biographical dictionaries?

Because the Christian system, in addition to such intrinsic excellence as it possesses, has been long interwoven with some of the best affections of mankind, and has been forced upon their notice by a striking series of events. There may be writers who have drawn up theories of morals more complete, and more invariably correct, than that which can be collected from the New Testament. But human nature is so constructed, that other things besides correctness give a man's opinions a title to perpetual remembrance. Action in the world, even more than thought in the closet, contributes to an enduring memorial. If Jesus had merely written in a formal treatise what he could say concerning morals, his name might never perhaps have reached us: certainly it would have attracted less notice than that of the more copious and systematic Jewish moralist, Jesus the son of Sirach. But he also stood forth as a public reformer, opposed his own more liberal spirit to the bigotry of his time, arrested men's attention by assuming the remarkable character of Messiah, and died a martyr. In his own personal career, he illustrated much of his precepts, and especially faith in heaven as the philosophy of suffering. The romance and pathos thus attached to his history, have given him a hold upon faculties of men more powerful than mere reason, and stamped all that proceeds from him with a weight and interest which the



mass of mankind would be slow to feel in mere philosophical merit. The hero of tales like those of the four Gospels, must ever be listened to with more attention than one who issues the most luminous disquisitions from the closet. So also the followers of Jesus were not merely writers, but by means of their organization, missions, and purity of life, revolutionized the human mind throughout the Roman empire, and reared the reformed Judaism amidst the ruins of polytheism and heathen philosophy. A long train of events of great historical importance is traced back to the lives of the Nazarene and his friends. From them has proceeded a succession of remarkable developments of the human mind. The early churches, with their affectionate spirit of brotherhood, and the pompous hierarchies which afterwards trod on the necks of princes; the desert cell of the solitary Egyptian, and the gorgeous cathedral with its solemn music and slow-moving trains of priests and virgins; the councils of mitred and imperial metaphysicians, as well as associations of practical philanthropists; the bigotry of inquisitions and crusades, as well as the calm resignation which in cloistered walls fixes its last hope on heaven; all these are amongst the indices pointing to the immense influence, political and moral, which has been exercised upon the world for eighteen centuries by the Cross.

It is not easy to decide the question, whether Christianity has hitherto produced more good or evil in the world. The varying systems of doctrines, which have passed under the name, may be considered as so many exciting causes, which, according to the prevailing dispositions of men, have promoted the growth of good or evil actions. The savage warrior of feudal times felt the name of Jesus chiefly as an incentive to exterminate the enemies of the Cross; the humane philanthropist has endeavoured to honour the same name by traversing lands and seas to relieve the oppressed. The spirit of enter-

prise, war, and cruelty, would be impelled by its Christianity to a crusade, and choose for its favourite texts, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword;" and "He that hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Benevolence would be quickened by the Gospel to a more active cultivation of the charities of life, and, throwing a veil over its harsher features, would select for its mottoes, "Do good unto all men," "Love your enemies." In the same manner, the desire of eternal salvation has added vehemence to the spirit of persecution on the one hand, and given consistency and perseverance to charitable effort on the other. The close connexion which Christianity establishes between mind and its invisible source, has tended to withdraw the unsocial spirit still deeper into morose solitude; whilst, in the more kindly disposed, it has added to the character the charm arising from the capacity for the devotional sentiment. Thus may we find a Torquemada and a Las Casas appealing to the same Gospel; nor is it easy even for the most impartial to ascertain the balance of good or evil which it has been the means of drawing forth, during the few stages of man's history, which have yet witnessed its operation. Yet, if it be admitted that stagnation is the worst evil which can befall the human mind, a system, which has called forth so many powerful energies, has at least a claim to prior consideration, even though these energies may have been hitherto in great part misdirected.

It is impossible to estimate Christianity fairly by reviewing the conduct of its professed votaries in past ages; since history evidently does not supply the means of separating accurately that part of their conduct which was produced by their Christianity, from that which originated in their own inherent dispositions or other circumstances. We must appeal to the judgment of the

enlightened modern moralist on the tendency of the New Testament, consisting of the story of Jesus and his disciples, and their precepts. Does he find the prevailing sentiments arising from the study of these records, upon the whole greatly favourable to his views? Does he find in them so much that is accordant with truth and virtue, that it is desirable to retain the name of Christ and the Scriptures as useful and powerful allies, in all those schemes for human improvement which the increased knowledge of modern times sanctions?

Now, it will scarcely be denied by the attentive reader of the New Testament, that even though there be some things which he may regard with doubt or disapprobation, there is much which awakens the best feelings more powerfully than could be effected by the most correct formal treatise on morals. Here, in the pleasing style of eastern apophthegm and parable, we find pictures of the final triumph of righteousness; the principle of benevolence enforced in a manner which allows of its application to the most extended views of the promoter of social improvement; and a general inculcation of the milder virtues which humanize mankind. The contemplation of the Deity is recommended under an aspect agreeable to reason, and congenial to the wants of the mind. Adversity meets with sympathy, and is directed to doctrines most calculated to give strength and patience, submission to the Divine will, and the hope of a future state. All this appears here with the weight due to things spoken by men who have acted an important part in the world; here, both romance and reality combine to impart interest to the precept. Where shall we find the dissertation on moral sentiments which speaks like the Gospels; where the professor of ethics who appeals to us with the same force as the inimitable Galilean, who teaches from the mount and the sea-side; is comforted by angels, the spirits which minister heaven's secret aid



to the soul; and—the inevitable anticipation of human nature on behalf of dying merit—rises from the dead, and ascends to the right hand of God?

With no hostility, then, towards Christ and Christianity may the Theist renounce his faith in miracles and prophecy; and without inconsistency may he be willing that the long train of associations which Christianity possesses with the history, the literature, the poetry, the moral and religious feelings of mankind, should long contribute their powerful influences in behalf of the cause of human improvement. Let all benefactors of mankind continue to look to Jesus as their forerunner in this great cause, and recognize a kindred mind in the Galilean who preached lessons of wisdom and benevolence in an early age of the world, and fell a sacrifice to the noble idea of introducing a kingdom of heaven upon earth. Let the good Samaritan still be cited as the example of humanity; the passover-supper be remembered as the farewell of Jesus to his friends; and God be worshiped under the character which he attributed to him,—the Father in heaven. Let painting and music still find solemn themes in the realities and fables relating to Jesus; let feasts and holidays still take their names from the events of his life, our time be dated from his birth, and our temples be surmounted by his cross.

Christianity, then, has been neither evil nor useless; but out of it will proceed a further mental growth. The religion of Egypt, Judaism, Christianity, and the more advanced system, which at a future time may, by the appearance of some remarkable individual, or combination of events, come to be designated by another name,—are all so many successive developments of the religious principle, which, with the progress of mankind, will assume a form continually approaching nearer to perfect truth. And in proportion as other religions make the same approximation, it will be gradually recognized that



God hath made all nations of one mind, as well as of one blood, to dwell upon all the face of the earth.

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In this early age of the world, it is impossible to foresee the whole of the creed at which unimpeded reason will ultimately arrive on the subject of religion. On this, more than on any other subject, the love of pure truth has been checked by interest, prejudice, and fear. The pressing wants of the human mind in this respect, co-existing with ignorance, have enabled the artful and ambitious to make religion peculiarly an instrument for their purposes; whilst the love of ease has led the mass of mankind to acquiesce readily in an usurpation, which, whatever were its inconveniences, pretended to satisfy fully their spiritual wants. To submit to authority, with all its burdensome terms, has been found by the world in general an easier bargain than to incur the labour of thought; and those who preferred the latter could only expect to be regarded, even amidst the loudest proclamations of liberty of conscience, with the dislike naturally felt towards those whose conduct tends to render men dissatisfied with a favourite purchase. And the more so, since this purchase was felt by the many to be the only means in their power of satisfying their want. Whilst nature was imperfectly understood, and the intellectual powers were but little cultivated, the many felt themselves incapable, by means of their own native powers, of drawing clearly from the universe around them the conclusions which occasionally seemed to break indistinctly upon them, but which their minds required in full assurance. Earth and skies continually suggested the idea of a First Cause, the knowledge of which seemed to be a natural want of the mind, and must influence materially the conduct. But was this instinctive feeling to be taken as full evidence of the existence of that

towards which it was directed?—and if not, how should minds oppressed with worldly cares, uneducated, or having but imperfect help from science, work out such a vast conclusion from their own resources? A word from Heaven would aid their weakness, solve their doubts, and afford them the delight of faith, without the trouble of acquiring it. What wonder, then, that men professing to have received this message from heaven, or to be its interpreters, should find a ready submission to their claims, succeed in having them admitted without a very rigid scrutiny, and continue to find docile recipients even long after they had begun, instead of bread, to give stones? During the ages of mankind's moral and intellectual minority, it seems indeed natural that authority, derived from the ascendancy of some few superior individuals, should exercise guardianship over the human mind, and provide its necessary food until full-grown reason should be able both to guide and nourish itself. Hence the philanthropist regards with complacency the various Revelations which have afforded to men spiritual supplies, although not of unmixed purity; and hears, in the supposed direct voices from heaven, prelude-sounds of the voice which speaks through nature and reason in a tone rising slowly into clearness in the lapse of ages.

But in time the human mind feels disposed to claim its birthright of free judgment, and takes pleasure in the task of providing for its own wants. It finds a necessity not only to live, but to think. It looks upon the forest, the hill, and the star, not only as a panorama intended to give a momentary gratification to the eye, but as volumes calling to deep thought. It sees that the universe gradually unrolls a succession of lessons which speak both to the intellect and to the heart, and conjectures that there may still lie some of surpassing importance, at present unsuspected, beneath the material surface of things. These, the sustained labour of the human mind

for many centuries will have to bring to light ; nor does it appear a strange dispensation that moral wealth, any more than physical, should be the result of the accumulated earnings of many generations, by means of labour in itself pleasing and beneficial.

It would be unreasonable to expect that the ultimate conclusions of the mind on religious subjects, should accord fully with any one of those early substitutes for developed reason, called Revelations. But as these could not have obtained prevalence unless they were, to a great extent, in accordance with some natural human sentiments, it may be conjectured that, in some important features at least, they will be found to agree with the conclusions referred to.

The first question which occurs, after renouncing revelation, is, whether it be in reality necessary or natural to the mind to have any religion at all. Why should we seek the unseen, when there is so much actually before the eye ? Does not the world, cognizable by our senses, afford enough to interest, occupy, and direct us, during our threescore years and ten ? Does not nature supply ample materials to delight the senses, science to employ the intellect, and the results of conduct enough to engage us on the side of virtue ? Can any thing more than this be of any practical value ? May it not be a delusion to suppose that there is any real Existence beyond what appears ; or, at least, that such Existence is any concern of ours ? If there be a God, and if it were intended that we should know him and think of him, would he not have published himself in such clear characters as none could overlook ? Cease, then, to fatigue thyself with abstractions : thyself and the things around thee are real, but the unseen is a visionary speculation. Cease thy restless and unsatisfying researches into the cause of things, and be content with the study of things themselves : release thy mind from its painful efforts to reach



what either is not, or is not by thee attainable; use and enjoy all the good within thy reach; view thyself as one small pivot in a machine of which it is no business of thine to discover the origin or the object; find in mankind and nature the only proper spheres of action and thought; and dare to confess to thyself, if not to a prejudiced and insincere world, "to me there is no God."

Yet the mind cannot rest here. It feels that such reasoning calls upon it to restrict some of its highest powers from their due exercise. To rest contented with what we see, is not in man. No dogma ever imposed by the most wanton church authority ever met with so much opposition, as would be encountered in the attempt to restrict men from inquiring into and forming theories concerning the Cause of the immense effects around them. In proportion as the mind awakes into life, it demands some kind of answer to the questions, What is the cause of all being?—and, Have we any thing to do with this cause? The indolent will fly to the nearest or most familiar authority for satisfaction; but few, who have once discovered the want, can be content to leave the vacancy entirely unfilled. Every view of nature revives the questions; the beautiful and sublime in the earth and heavens are felt to be something beneath the powers of man, if regarded only as affording gratification to the senses and fancy; deeper chords lie in him waiting to be struck; and what he sees must ere long suggest to him the knowledge and love of the unseen.

It cannot be denied that this train of thought is not entered into readily at all times, or by all. A large proportion of mankind, including many of the moral and talented, are too much occupied with active pursuits to bestow more than a slight passing attention on such abstract subjects as the cause of things, the nature of the Deity, and the like. These subjects they leave to the clergy. Their importance even makes men unwilling to



touch them with that insufficient degree of thought which they have been able to bestow upon them. Hence some questions of the deepest interest lose the benefit of that free unrestrained discussion which is the surest method of evolving truth. The reverence which keeps men at a distance makes them also lose sight of an object; to keep up an interest, they must be allowed to approach and inspect. Neutrality, however, arising from these causes, is not indifference. Although disinclined to dwell frequently upon religious subjects, most of the practical men referred to, the promoters of the business of the world, admit their importance in regard to individual and social happiness. The legislator or citizen may have seldom thought upon the proofs of the existence of an Intelligent first cause; he has neither had time to study the arguments of natural theology, nor the evidences of revelation: but he is able to appreciate some of the effects which the recognition of a God produces upon the moral condition of men; he feels that such a belief is satisfactory to the mind, and comes in aid of every plan for improving society. He judges of the tree by its fruits. Unable himself to discover the root, he yet concludes that the source from which proceed so many ramifications bearing palpable and useful effects, cannot itself be a mere visionary abstraction, existing only in the brains of theologians and metaphysicians. His short reasoning is,—I see that it is well for men to believe that God is; therefore he is. Yet, conscious of some deficiency in this reasoning, he gladly receives the assistance which any well-reputed authority offers; and especially welcomes that, which, from antiquity, vested interests, and the countenance of large influential bodies of men, appears to him to have had hitherto the greatest weight,—the revealed Word of God.

The conduct, then, of the majority of enlightened and benevolent practical men, who devote but little attention

to religious subjects, is not a proof of latent Atheism, but proceeds rather from a persuasion either that such subjects are out of their sphere, or have been already determined upon by higher authority. Truths of this kind, they admit, are of great practical importance; but it is their part to act quickly, rather than to think deeply: the divine presence is not felt in the crowd, nor the divine voice distinguished amidst the hum of men. Let him who has leisure seek for truth in the groves, endeavour to catch those whispers of Nature which are only heard in her most lonely recesses, and impart the precious oracles to the world.

Solitude is indispensable to deep thought, and consequently to the discovery of truth. The laws of gravitation were discovered by much patient calculation and reflection, apart from the multitude. Hence it would be no objection to the doctrine of an Intelligent first cause, if it were admitted that it is not obvious at first sight; that by men of the world it is held chiefly in deference to authority, or for the sake of expediency; and that a real conviction of its truth is attained only by the few who are able to retire into themselves to think. The tendency of abstract truths to fade away from the mind, when engaged in active pursuits, is no argument against their reality. The laws of Kepler, which appeared so clear and striking to the student in his observatory, may be remembered as uninteresting and even doubtful visions, after he has been for a long time immersed in things nearer to the senses, and forgotten the demonstration on which they rested; but let him retire again into the stillness of nature, and endeavour to descry again the lost planetary characters;—by degrees they come out into brightness and magnitude, and display again the astonishing declaration in full distinctness. So may it be with a greater revelation than these,—the existence of God. Nature bears it inscribed in all parts; but man is not able immediately to read it. By degrees only he learns

the characters which convey the deep sense, and what he has learned by intent meditation occasionally seems to fade away: nevertheless Nature still remains; and whatever truths she really bears inscribed, must continually re-appear to him who seeks her, and, in the end, be brought out in clearness to the whole world. The hieroglyphics are ineffaceable; the tablet is continually within view; time, then, must ever bring men nearer to Nature's great revelation, the full knowledge of God.\*

Atheism asserts that we have no right to infer the existence of any thing more than what appears to our senses. The Universe exists, and may be called God, if we will; but where and what is God, distinct from the universe? This great Whole exists;—why, we can no more tell than we can why there should always have been an universal Nothing: but how is the difficulty removed by supposing an imaginary being distinct from the universe, whom we call its Creator? The problem is merely shifted, for we can no more account for this being's existence, than we could for that of the universe. What caused God, is as hard to answer as, what caused the universe. We may as well acquiesce in ignorance at the first step. Unless we invent another cause which caused God, and continue to suppose preceding causes *ad infinitum*, it is evident that we must somewhere be content to admit a first uncaused cause; and why not admit it at once in that which appears before us as a palpable fact, this material universe itself, of which we and all things are parts? What necessity for imagining an intelligent creator? Of ten million possible forms of matter, we see

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\* The religion of the universe consists in knowing God; and that knowledge is not a simultaneous burst of light, or lights, upon the mind, but an accumulation of particulars perpetually increasing; and hence it is in conformity with the slow but certain intellectual advancement of man.—*Dr. Fellowes' Religion of the Universe*, p. 121.



the one which is. The universe exists; every thing that exists must have certain properties; the universe possesses the property of unfolding in succession various forms of matter, organization, and life. All around us is the result of the inherent powers of nature, or, in other words, the necessary properties of the universal matter. To admit that matter exists with these properties, is no more difficult than to admit that it exists at all. If matter exist uncaused, having extension and solidity, it may also exist uncaused, having the property of developing life. Where we can trace the causes of any effects which we see, let us admit them, but not invent fanciful ones. That this wondrous harmonious whole exists, is a fact; that Intelligence caused it, and sits an invisible potentate guiding and directing it,—is a dream.

This is Atheism. It bids us sink into incurious repose respecting unseen causes, as being neither our concern, nor within our reach. And if man could indeed extend his thoughts no farther than to what he saw and touched, he must acquiesce in this barren negation of inquiry. But a prominent part of his nature, the reflective and moral, asserts its right and capacity to penetrate beyond what is seen, and presses Atheism with the further question,—Is it more *reasonable* to suppose that this universe has been produced by Intelligence or not?

If we can imagine ourselves placed in a situation where there was no analogy to guide us, i. e., where we had no experience of the kind of effects which Intelligence is capable of producing, the question might be very difficult to answer. Yet here we should only be compelled to confess ignorance: we should say, we cannot tell whether this universe exists without any cause beyond what we see; it does not appear clearly absurd, although difficult to conceive, that matter should have, of its own nature, a non-intelligent power of developing the various forms



which make up the universe. This power might be either the necessary result of the known properties of matter, extension, solidity, attraction, mobility, and the like, in certain combinations; or it might be some additional property, distinct from all these, but, like them, non-intelligent. This does not at once appear impossible. But neither, on the other hand, does it appear absurd that there should be some further cause for the development of nature, viz., either some property of matter of a *different kind* from those mentioned, or something altogether independent of matter. If Intelligence be proposed as this further cause, we ought to have an example of what it is, and a specimen of the effects which it is known to produce. Then only can we judge whether Intelligence be a proper and probable cause of the effects which we see in the universe.

Now, we have an instance both of what intelligence is, and of the effects which it is capable of producing, viz. in ourselves, and in the results of mankind's inventive powers. The question supposed is answered by an analogy between the effects which human intelligence is known to produce, and those which we see in nature. The progress both of art and science continually strengthens the analogy; that of the former by affording a more complete instance of the known effects of intelligence, that of the latter by extending our knowledge of nature.

Let us imagine ourselves placed before a varied landscape, of which one feature is a noble mansion. The question occurs to us, What caused that mansion? Unless we call in that extreme scepticism which appears sometimes in our disputations, but never in our practice, we reply at once, the intelligence or mind\* of the builder,

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\* Intelligence, or the reasoning power, is one of the manifestations of Mind; but Mind may include much more, sentiments and affections for instance. I prefer to fall into the use of the more general term, because the same kind of reasoning which leads us

and feel perfectly satisfied with the answer. Although we had not seen that particular mansion built, we had seen other similar artificial structures in the process of building, or we had had opportunities of knowing what means were employed in raising such structures; and in all cases we had invariably found that the mind of a builder was necessary to produce the building. In the particular instance before us, we could not refuse to recognize a similar cause, although unseen to us, without doing violence to that principle of our mental constitution which leads us to infer the connexion of similar causes with similar effects; a principle which is practically admitted as a sure and sufficient basis for the whole reasoning and conduct of life. To the suggestion, that although other mansions were produced by the mind of a builder, yet that particular one might have existed for ever, or come into being without any cause beyond the inherent properties of the materials themselves—we should answer, that hitherto we had had no experience of an instance of this kind, nor any reason to believe that there had ever been such an instance; that consequently we must rest in the conviction which common sense, or reasoning flowing from the natural healthy use of the faculties, forced upon us; viz. a conviction derived from an accessible and abundant analogy.

The mansion, then, was caused by mind;—what caused the other parts of the landscape, the trees, the grass, the water, the sun, and the animals? Analogy forces upon us here, also, the answer,—Mind.

For those appearances in the mansion which indicate

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to infer intelligence in the creating principle, may lead us to infer more. There is no incorrectness in adopting the wider term, because wherever there is intelligence there must be mind; and there is a convenience in giving to the principle referred to a name, which without necessarily implying, allows room for, the further qualities which may appear attributable to it.

to us so irresistibly the agency of mind, the adaptation of materials to each other in such a manner as to produce a beautiful or useful result, are found in greater force and variety in the scenery around. A single leaf, blade of grass, or limb of an animal, when we come to examine it, displays joints, vessels, tubes, and other apparatus, more varied and highly finished than any in the artificial structure and its contents. Yet, in many parts, there is sufficient resemblance to impress us with the conviction of the same kind of mental agency.

This common argument from design does not always strike us with much force when viewing objects in nature, because we forget or overlook the fact, that these objects are each of them the result of an arrangement of very complicated parts. From ignorance or indolence, we are apt to fall into the habit of looking upon a plant, an animal, a planet, or even the universe, as one simple whole or unit, and dispose of all nature with as much ease as if it were one ultimate globule. But science puts before us, in all directions, microscopes, telescopes, and analyzing instruments, and accustoms us to see in all the wholes which present themselves skilful adaptations of numerous parts. In proportion, then, as scientific attainments become familiar and common, men will be able to recognize, without effort, the traces of mind in the various material forms which surround them. At first, the lesson was spelled out with difficulty; but, by long acquaintance with the characters, a meaning is inevitably perceived whenever we glance on a page. Nature, in every part, will at length present to us an easily understood as well as deeply interesting meaning, the evidence of a beneficent mental Energy, manifested in moulding matter into innumerable forms of the beautiful and useful.

Nature, in its most obvious aspects, does not at once impress us with the idea of design. The rocks, the woods, the sea, and the stars, seem thrown together with a wildness and irregularity, which rather leave the idea



of chance. Some degree of science is necessary to the first conceptions of design. The motions of the heavenly bodies, the watering of the earth by means of rain, and the adaptation of the productions of the earth to the wants of animals, present, however, appearances of arrangement open to the slightest observation, and seem to have first led men to the idea of an Intelligent cause. As the observation of nature, or science, proceeds, instances of arrangement multiply on all sides, till the moss on the rudest fragment in the wilderness, or the wave which washes the wildest beach, are found to contain specimens of minute mechanism. Nature is not loquacious, although filled with inexhaustible stores; she presents enough at first sight to attract the thoughtful; but mankind must interrogate and study her for many ages, in order to come at all, perhaps to a thousandth part, of that which she has to communicate. The brilliant appearance of the heavens, and a few of the planetary motions, were enough to reward the gaze of the first Chaldean shepherds; but the persevering assiduity of mankind, from Hipparchus to Herschel, was necessary to procure them an insight into the depths of the universe.

In the present age, science is sufficiently advanced to present abundant instances of harmonious arrangement, whether in earth, seas, or skies. But the conviction of an Intelligent cause does not appear invariably to accompany scientific progress. This may proceed from two causes; first, from a disinclination to exercise the reflecting powers on unseen causes, whilst visible effects present such ample and ready themes of contemplation. Acquiescence in this disposition of mind appears to be the chief argument of Atheism, which does not so much deny the existence of unseen causes, as refuse to enter into the search for them. But it seems improbable that a progressive knowledge of the mental constitution will sanction as true philosophy, that which appears to be a mere restriction of the reflective faculties.



Or, the non-acknowledgment of an Intelligent cause, even after an extensive acquaintance with science, may proceed from that over-scrupulousness, or indecision of mind, which refuses to admit any principle on the ground of high probability, or to receive any proposition whilst the contrary is barely possible. This is extreme scepticism, condemned as unreasonable by the general practice of mankind. The evidences of design in nature, similar to those which appear in art, crowd in upon us from every side. If in the latter case the agency of mind be admitted, why should men demur at admitting it in the former? Perhaps, from a suspicion that the analogy may not be sufficiently close.

In some steam-engines, we find that the steam, after having performed its office in raising and depressing the piston, passes into the condenser, and becomes cold water, being in this state no longer fit for the purposes of the engine. But we find also an apparatus of pipes for conveying this cold water again to the boiler, that very part where there is a provision for converting it again into steam. That this apparatus is the effect of design or mind, we feel convinced of by the sight of it, and should acquire little or no addition to our certainty, if the maker were to stand visibly before us and declare himself as such. Even though we had never seen a steam-engine before, yet our certainty on this point would not be less, if we had been in the habit of witnessing mechanical contrivances.

In the human body, we find that the arterial blood, after having supplied nourishment to various glands, becomes unfit for further use; and we find a system of veins for carrying it back to the heart, that very part which, by a connexion with the lungs, contains a provision for re-converting it into arterial.

Now, the circumstance which compels us to infer mental agency in the former case, the adaptation of parts to produce a certain end, exists equally, at least, in the

latter. We must infer mental agency here also by the law of our nature, which compels us to infer similar causes from similar effects.

As in the various works of human art we recognize the *same kind* of mental agency, which we call intelligence, although in different degrees, according as the works are better or worse contrived, and, for aught we know, combined with different accompanying qualities in each artificer; so do we recognize the same kind of agency, intelligence, in nature, although here it may be of a different degree, and possibly combined in the artificer with other qualities different from those belonging to human inventors.

In examining the *columnæ carneæ*, the *semilunar valves*, or other contrivances of nature, the thought frequently occurs, either that this is similar to what some ingenious mechanist has contrived, or what he might have invented by bestowing sufficient consideration upon it. So strong is the conviction of similarity of effect between nature and art, that many of the contrivances in the former do not appear to us, even in degree, absolutely beyond the scope of human ingenuity, if but time and means enough had been granted.

So long, then, as the constitution of our minds compels us to reason from analogy, the proposition that the works of nature proceed from the development of the inherent powers of matter, can no more satisfy us than if the same were proposed as the cause of the works of art.

It has been argued, that we cannot apply analogy to find the cause of the universe, because this is an unique, and we have no other caused universe to compare it with.\* But we can compare it with parts of itself, viz. ourselves and our works; and it does not appear why analogies arising

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\* See Hume's Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding, Section xi. near the end.

thence should not have as much weight as if we could compare one universe with another. We have a right to reason from what we know; we are so placed as to see causes in some small parts of the universe, and thence, by analogy, to infer something of the nature of the cause of the whole.

Imagine the inhabitant of a distant country, in some degree acquainted with mechanical contrivances, inspecting an European steam-engine or watch. By long study he comes to perceive the object of the machine, and the adaptation of parts so as to effect that object. Knowing his own power of putting together matter with some degree of success, so as to produce certain effects, he concludes, rationally, that the machine before him must have proceeded from a being resembling himself in the possession of such a power. He may be ignorant of the form, colour, habits, and language of the unknown artist, but he reads his *mind* with as much certainty as if he stood before him; for the machine speaks in a language which needs no translation. If neither time, nor space, could hinder the intelligent Japanese from recognizing the kindred mind of the European by means of its works; why should time, space, or any other mode of separation, prevent any thinking man from recognizing the kindred mind of the First Cause by means of its works? Whether the unseen existence be separated from us by land, seas, and years, or by a different mode of being, matters not, if the work speaks clearly. The distance of the pole-star could not prevent the electric recognition; neither can the more impassable chasm between us and an existence shrouded from our senses.

It might be objected that this mode of analogical reasoning would prove too much, and lead us to conclude that the First Cause has material organs like our own, since we infer the existence of these, as well as of mind, from all specimens of human art. But this objection



supposes an abuse of analogy. We certainly do infer that, with respect to pieces of workmanship, apparently of human origin, the originators had, in all probability, hands and feet like our own; because we believe that there are no beings on the earth possessing the requisite mental endowments, except such as have likewise these organs as their means of acting on matter. But we could not infer justly that other beings, having mind, might not have different organs wherewith to operate on matter. A piece of mechanism, known to be brought from some part of the earth, leads us to infer, without much hesitation, that the maker had hands or feet. But if another piece of mechanism were brought to us, known to come from another planet, we should only dare to infer that the maker had some kind of prehensile power, by means of which he had put together the material parts. The intricacy and perfection of the work, if apparently surpassing human art, might lead us to conclude that the unknown maker had means of penetrating into and guiding matter, more subtle and more effective than any human organ or instrument. They might be, in these respects, so different from human organs, that a comparison between the two could only be admitted as figurative. The mind, by means of the human hand alone, affects matter slowly and clumsily; it learns to employ, in some degree, instruments provided by nature, from the wooden staff to the electric fluid and chemical solvent. But other minds might be gifted with the means of grasping more directly the forces of nature, and of employing them with a facility, and to an extent, by us unattainable. They might cleave with the lightning, and communicate by the thunder. Where, from the effects, we should judge that this greater prehensility of the forces of nature had existed, we should conclude that the operating mind had been endowed with means of influencing matter more efficacious than our organs.



In the universe the mental agency appears to have operated upon matter, with a range and a subtilty, which are expressed in the description,—an Almighty pervading soul. The arm reaches beyond the farthest star, yet discriminates the breadth of a hair; it projects the heavy planet, and moulds the minutest particle. It is impossible to imagine that mind, acting through human organs, or any resembling them, could, after ages of essay and improvement, ever approach the operation of that agency either in magnitude or exquisiteness. To form a work, not only perfect in itself, but also containing a provision for producing its like in endless succession, would probably for ever baffle human ingenuity. But this is one of the most common properties of the works of nature. It is so difficult to imagine any kind of *organs*, by which such an universal efficient sway over matter could have been exerted, that we naturally acquire the notion that the first Causing Mind must have operated upon matter direct, without the intervention of any organs, and that every atom must have obeyed its influence with the same promptness as the nerve obeys human volition.

Analogy, then, leads us to infer that the works of nature were caused by some kind of mind, as well as the works of art. But so far from proving that that mind operated by means of organs resembling ours, it rather brings us to the conclusion, that it must have had means of influencing matter very different from ours. The man moves bodies by impulses of his limbs; we can imagine a being gifted with the power of doing so by directing towards the bodies at will the requisite degree of attraction or repulsion. More subtle agencies than these may be supposed to be subject to volition; and thus may we refine from man's clumsy mode of operation, to a being in whom Mind acts directly and universally upon Matter.

Even in the case of man, we know but little of the *mode* in which his mind acts upon matter. Our total

ignorance of the mode of action of a divine mind does, therefore, by no means disprove such action. Neither is it a disproof of this, that we are ignorant of the mode of the divine existence, whether it pervades the whole material creation, as a soul the body; or sits an independent invisible potentate amidst its creatures. Ask also whether the Divine Mind threw off the creation at once, perfect, and holding its own resources of progression and development, or whether his energy is perpetually required to uphold his work; and the doubtfulness of the answer will perhaps be in proportion to the time of reflection. But where is the truth, the clearest ever acknowledged by men, which busy thought has not soon surrounded and clogged with embarrassing or unanswerable questions? Man knows nothing but what lies close to something unknown or unknowable.

How can God exist? Answer first, how does man exist? Man is not the hand, nor the foot, nor the stomach, nor the brain, nor even the eye; but in the combined action of all his material parts do we recognize the man. And what is this action? Continue to question thus; and the wisest deed, and the most expressive glance, are resolved into the motion of sundry clusters of oxygen, carbon, and the like, in different directions. Man himself shrinks into an abstraction, which soon becomes so hazy, that if, his existence depended on our power to define him, we should begin to doubt if we really had any fellow-creatures.\*

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\* Sic mentem hominis, quamvis eam non videas, ut Deum non vides, tamen ut Deum agnoscis ex operibus ejus; sic ex memoria rerum et inventione, et celeritate motus, omnique pulchritudine virtutis vim divinam mentis agnoscito.... Illud modo videto, ut Deum noris, etsi ejus ignores et locum et faciem, sic animum tibi tuum notum esse oportere, etiam si ignores et locum et formam.—*Cicero, Tusc. Disp. lib. 1. cap. 29.*

Nevertheless, man's existence is sufficiently palpable, although we cannot explain it. O that the First Cause had made his at least equally so; that the awful Potentate had once unveiled himself to our eyes, or that his voice had once broken through the obstinate silence of nature! Then we must have believed, without, or in spite of, any reasoning. Why? because he would have appealed to our senses. Reflect;—and thou wilt find that he *has* appealed to some of man's highest senses, his moral and intellectual powers. He compliments man, by addressing the highest part of his nature.

In what manner do we know a man best and most thoroughly?—By his appearance? No.—By his conversation? Better; but not so well as by experiencing his conduct in a long series of deeds. These speak in the surest manner; they speak to our moral and intellectual senses: and thus may we know thoroughly him whom we have never seen or heard.

And thus does God choose to speak to man—by *deeds*. A more subtle mode of communication than the brightest vision or the softest whisper; but, to the thinking, more refined, more pleasing, more intelligible. Let children look for cherubim, and rhapsodists for voices from heaven; mature reason and feeling appreciate more highly Works of beauty and beneficence. In what language should God have spoken to men from heaven, or written his message in the sky? In Hebrew! in Greek! in Sanscrit! He has chosen his own language; and has he not well chosen? Does not the rose or the hyacinth speak as plainly as could any noun or participle, the verdure running before the breeze exceed the sense of any aorist, and the star rising above the wood convey more than any Hebrew point? God can do without hiphil and hophal, without pluperfect and paulo-post future: he is perfect in the language of signs, and the



whole material creation is his symbol-picture to all ranks of intelligence.

Yet God's magnificent language fails at times to convince us ; and restless scepticism suggests that, if the First Cause were really intelligent and beneficent mind, he might have made his existence more irresistibly clear to us. By what means ? Rack thy utmost ingenuity, scepticism, and say what God should have done to convince thee. He might have planted an angel showman on each work of nature, to inform every visitant, in clear tones, that it was produced by intelligence and benevolence ; he might have fixed Uriel for ever in the sun, to trumpet forth to the planets that the fountain of their light and heat was derived from a first cause provident and good :—would any deeper conviction really spring from the presence of these officious informants ? and would not Uriel himself soon come to be considered the most superfluous piece of work in the system ? Or, more solemn than this, the Divine Mind itself might make itself perceptible to man's senses by some periodical Shechinah, and above the sapphire pavement of the firmament, or in the amber-coloured vision surmounting the wheels, or from the pillar of fire, or in the still whisper, startle man at times with the presence of his God. But what would avail the visitation of the awful Presence ? If it proclaimed each time that itself was the first cause of nature, intelligent and benevolent, man would turn to nature for verification, and believe just so much of the proclamation as he found there confirmed. When accustomed to the visitation, he would gain little or no more certainty above that resulting from his inquiries into nature. He would give greater credence to the language to which God has, in fact, confined himself,—*the language of deeds*.

There is a composure and dignity in God's manner of proceeding which impresses more forcibly than could be



done by the ostentation of actual speech and appearance. He is seen and heard in his works. The universe is the splendid but quiet language in which he utters his stupendous "I am." What is it all for? occurs to every one who looks on nature and thinks. The First Intelligence intended to make himself known to all emanating intelligences, and this is the way in which he has chosen to effect it; it being as easy to him to throw off all this array of worlds and mechanism, as to set the types of two short words.

Nature thus seen as the language of mind, assumes a brighter hue and more vigorous life, than when viewed under a mere material aspect. What is this lovely prospect of variegated fields and sunny sky, if nothing in it can feel like thyself, nor aught in it indicate the existence of perception kindred to thy own? Acknowledge that it pleases the eye, invigorates health, and supplies forms to the fancy;—this is much: but is not the profuse beauty of nature worthy to do more, and to speak to all that is highest in man, his admiration, love, and reverence? It does so, as soon as we see in Nature the offspring and index of Mind. What is all this prodigious array of shining globes, if they tell of nothing more than themselves, insentient moving masses, fit to employ arithmetic and geometry with counting their numbers and laws? Even when the deepest and most magnificent apartments of nature are thrown open, the soul remains solitary and chill at the sight of them alone, and asks if all this costly pile be intended to gratify only a small part of the man, leaving his more god-like faculties uninvited strangers? Does Nature indeed, in her softest recesses or most gorgeous displays, aim merely at inciting man to see, hear, smell, and calculate? Yet what more than this can he do amidst mere matter, however large or small, or swift or slow? But admit Mind as the cause of all, the pervader and beholder of all, and the chasm is filled; man

also admires, loves, and venerates. A vivifying spirit is infused into creation, and gives the response which his soul demanded. The desert is not solitude, nor the sea dreariness. The thoughts of the unseen mental causes, which become associated with all the objects of nature, leave no want of Dryads in the woods, Naiads in the brooks, or Genii in the air. The Sun proclaims more vitality than light and heat, as he mounts above the hill; the Moon's crescent bends before the pervading Spirit; Arcturus follows his wain round the pole, and Andromeda rises from the wave, in unwearied obedience to the Invisible; the Pleiads shake adoration as well as radiance from their glittering cluster; and all the mystic forms of the sky seem to look on the earth with awful silent life,—for each and all are the work, the voice, and the token, of Living Mind.

But, the laws of nature! inflexible, insensible, but all moving; do they not reduce the universe to a regular perpetually going piece of clockwork, and exclude mind by filling all with lifeless iron mechanism? All this beauty and harmony is merely the consequence of each atom's obedience to its own laws. What causes the course of the planet? Not God, but attraction of gravitation. What causes attraction? Some preceding necessary property of matter, which science will by and by discover. For each of the enormous collection of effects constituting the whole which we see, we find, on examination, a material cause, with another material cause behind it; and when we have discovered causes which appear invariably to precede certain effects, we call the sequence a law of nature. Admit the laws of nature to be, and what necessity for God? Explore the chains of causes and effects;—as far as we can trace them, no mind appears; the links join on perfectly, although only material, in the portion before us; and so may they also in the length stretching out of our reach. The more

closely we examine any part of creation, the more do Cause and Effect rise up, and claim as their work what our glowing imagination had superficially attributed to the operation of Mind. Trace causes and effects then, O philosopher; examine minutely each part of what you see, and say if the phantasm of a Causing Mind will not be gradually pushed out of the universe.

Yes, by resting in a minute examination of parts only, and overlooking the result of each whole. Thus might mind be excluded from man and his works. What work of art is there, in which the aim and intent, i. e. the mind, of the artist may not be missed, if we confine our attention to groping amongst the details? The examination of these may let us into the secret of the *means* which he has employed to bring about his purpose; but to seize this purpose, and read his meaning, we must look at the whole working and effect. Is it a sufficient explanation of the steam-engine to give, in correct detail, the connexion and dependence of each of its parts; to shew how the working of one part must necessarily follow the action of the preceding; to state that the water must be raised from the well, because the upward motion of the bucket is the necessary sequence of the motion of the wheel, as this is caused inevitably by the motion of the beam, which follows of necessity the stroke of the piston, which could not but result from the pressure of the steam, which must proceed from the action of heat upon the water in the boiler? And here might an indefinite further chain of mechanical causes be supposed; but this tracing of the chain of sequences leaves all the while unexplained the cause of the whole work. Each successive link suggests more forcibly the idea of something more, which arranged the train of material causes and effects, so as to end in an apparently contemplated result.

But the mind of man, to which our pipes and boiler lead us, is itself a continuation of the mechanism, although



of more subtle construction and properties! Grant this; the mind *is* mechanism, inasmuch as it is moved by springs, of a peculiar make,—reason, desires, and affections. Let us but trace nature back to this kind of *mental mechanism*, and it is enough; man has found a cause resembling himself. Call mind mechanism; define it as subject to its own fixed laws, or otherwise; it is sufficient to trace nature back to Mind.

The explanation of the sequence of action in the successive parts would seem an absurdity, if offered as the sufficient cause of any piece of human art. Why, then, should it satisfy us any more in the works of nature? The chains of cause and effect in these are longer, and reach back farther than we can follow; in few of them, if any, can we arrive at the link where the causing mind itself operated upon matter.\* Nevertheless, here matter seems no more gifted with the power of arranging itself, than in brass wheels and iron bars; nor of contemplating, any more than they, the beautiful and useful result in which this long chain of adaptation ends. Do the sun, the rain, the soil, the roots, and the sap-vessels, take counsel together to form the flower? If they do not, something else must; or the flower appears before us as a fortunate accident. What a vast assemblage of fortunate accidents make up the universe! For here, millions of chains of causes and effects end in results beneficial to sentient beings; and all these separate results harmonize together in a beautiful whole.†

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\* The introduction of new species into the universe, not explicable by a transmutation of preceding ones, as in the case of the recent origin of man, seems an instance of this kind. And the same might be said, perhaps, of the introduction of the first sentient creature upon this planet.

† After making the largest allowance for the results apparently evil or useless, such as pestilential vapours, burning deserts, noxious insects and reptiles, and the like, there remains a large



The more science advances, the more does it appear that all parts of nature are connected. Not only is the air about us adapted to the organs of plants and animals ; but the light from the farthest star finds itself at home on the retina of man. And the influence of bodies in remotest space is reverberated through the firmament as far as our system by means of attraction. Probably, no part of the universe could be annihilated without detriment to the rest. On the supposition of separate independent chains of causes and effects, uncaused by mind, the Universal Harmony is a startling conclusion. We should not be prepared to expect this. Some few of the results might have formed harmonious combinations ; but, in general, we should have expected to find the universe a miscellaneous assemblage of effects, having no apparent harmony, adaptation, or subserviency,—a heap of confused incongruous productions, which no art could piece together into a serviceable whole. The harmonious combination of the results of the chains is, indeed, a striking feature, which forces itself on the attention, and demands imperatively some solution. It could not be an accident ; for the chains are numerous,

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majority of beneficial productions in nature. The catalogue of apparent exceptions is continually decreasing as science advances, and contributes its items to the opposite list. For instance, insects and reptiles have enjoyed their own lives, and contributed to maintain the earth in the state fit for animal life. When man comes into contact with them, the noxious qualities of some species indicate that man and they are not intended to dwell together ; and the very courses which are for his interest in other respects, cleanliness, improvement of soils, and draining of marshes, tend to extirpate them. The large majority of acknowledged instances of good, and the probability that the remaining ones of apparent evil will come, in time, to be classed with them, allow of the general unqualified assertion, that the arrangements of nature end in beneficial results.

and the harmony complete ; there must have been *something* influencing them all ; some bond of union which has given a common character and tendency to all the chains, and established a relationship between the most distant and dissimilar parts of nature. What is this Something, which has tied all nature together in a mysterious and beautiful connexion ? What answer can satisfy us as to this deep-working and all-pervading somewhat ?—Cause and effect ?—an inherent property of Order in matter ?—a Law of nature ? None of these ; but a causing Mind.

The harmony of the creation, the adaptation of innumerable parts into a whole which our minds recognize as skilfully arranged, beautiful, and useful, impresses us irresistibly with the agency of mind. And this impression cannot be weakened by finding that the forming Mind has operated through a greater or less train of secondary causes. Grant that the planet has resulted from a fragment thrown off from the sun, and that the sun itself has resulted from the condensation of a whirling nebulous mass, and that this nebula proceeded from something else unknown, but all according to the fixed laws of matter ; still the Solar System, which is now before us, is not less admirable, nor less obviously suitable to the wants of plants and animals, for appearing thus as the result of a long train of secondary causes, than if it had sprung forth at once in maturity from the Creator's fiat. Trace back also the vegetable and animal forms which cover the earth, through a long series of developments, to the period when its surface seemed only to present a rude collection of unmoulded materials ; the riches of the Seasons, which we now experience, are not the less ravishing to men's minds and senses. Nature presents us with a magnificent and harmonious pattern. Who will say, that it is less obviously the result of a skilful mind, because the threads which compose it appear to have proceeded from the original design, through much ma-

chinery of cause and effect? The pattern makes its own declaration of a designing mind, whatever be the means by which it was woven; whether, at once, from the fingers of the artist, or through a long series of intermediate machinery. Secondary causes exhibit the machinery which God has made use of; the laws of nature shew his system of working with matter; they are the loom of his own construction, through which he throws off from eternity a succession of splendid works.\*

Matter, in the same circumstances, appears always to act, or to be acted upon, in the same manner; and these fixed rules of action or passion we call laws of nature. It is true that, supposing the different materials which compose the Creation to have been in existence, and these laws to have been in force, we can imagine that the present scene of things might have resulted, of necessity, from the progressive action and re-action of the materials. Place on the stage of infinite space, heat with its expansive power, water with its pressure in proportion to depth, the array of chemical elements with their respective degrees of affinity, and all matter with attraction in inverse proportion to the square of the distance,—and we can imagine that these actors must necessarily have played together a drama, of which the different acts appear successively throughout eternity in the varying phases of the universe. But what kind of a scene results

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\* In Being's floods, in Action's storm,  
I walk and work, above, beneath,  
Work and weave in endless motion!

Birth and Death,

An infinite Ocean;

A seizing and giving

The fire of the Living:

'Tis thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,

And weave for God the Garment thou see'st Him by.

*Song of the Earth-Spirit, in Faust.*



from the actions of all these various performers? One of confusion, an assemblage of incoherent results, independent of each other, or warring with and destroying each other? No; but one in which our minds recognize, the more we study it, an harmonious and mutually supporting action. Then heat, water, and their brethren, have acted together with a concord which it would be impossible to inspire, in the same degree, into creatures even gifted with reason. Had they all some glimmering perception of the orderly and the beautiful, which made each one of the company fall readily into that mode of action, which, in combination with the rest, should tend best to such a result? The harmonious action of the drama proves it to be a regular and well-planned piece, and not a wild unconcerted pantomime; if, then, we find nothing in the actors themselves indicating that they had powers sufficient to contrive it, we must conclude that the piece had an author of greater powers than they, who does not, himself, appear on the scenes, but under whose direction each of these subordinate agents is playing the part which he has written for it. And this Great Unseen, who has written the drama of the Universe, to be played by the different forms of matter, in the parts called laws of nature, for the instruction of all ranks of intelligence, —is Mind.

But suppose, that what appear to us different laws of nature are only modifications of one and the same principle; and that the researches of science will tend continually to simplify all into the action of One great law of nature, seen by us under various aspects. This one law then was such, that, being applied to matter, it had the power of producing an harmonious and progressive creation. What could be this law, having, in itself, the germ of endless variety, order, and beauty? How fortunate that matter happened to be subject to this, rather than some other, which should have produced quite different



effects! A law, principle, or somewhat, which is capable of producing in such abundance things which appear so much like the results of skill and intelligence! It rises itself into a Deity; but then the words law or principle imply incogitation, and mere mode of action or being in something else. If we will not change the ideas which the sight of creation urges us to apply to this somewhat, we must change the words. Law or Principle is insufficient. And why embarrass ourselves in inventing new names and definitions for this hidden but powerful somewhat, which has caused creation, when we are so fortunate as to have close to us many specimens of something known to produce, on a smaller scale, similar effects? And that is Mind, creating Mind.

Imagine ourselves excluded for a moment from the view of surrounding creation; what would be our reflections on considering the existence of mind in ourselves? —that the human mind was probably the only instance of this kind of existence! Impossible. Man feels his own mind to be but a small portion of a power which awakens matter into the highest kind of life: he delights to feel this power in himself, and to exercise it; but the attempt convinces him that he has it in only a small degree. The dominion over matter, which he finds his mental faculties bestow, gives him the desire to enlarge these faculties. Since, with his petty actual endowment, he is able to mould a few materials within his immediate reach, what dominion might he not attain, if he could indefinitely enlarge this power? And may there not be beings gifted with a higher degree of that which he feels himself to possess on so limited a scale? Can man be the moral and intellectual unique in creation? How surprising, that, in a world so redundant with *matter*, this higher creation, *mind*, should be so scarce, that the narrow little portion of it found in man should be the highest degree of it existing! But issue forth into the open view of nature;

look from the earth to the firmament, at the stupendous mechanism of Nature, and hear her confirm thy hesitating thoughts. See here the infinite of that which in thee is finite:—mind is not in thee alone; above, below, and around, see the effects of it when free, unbounded, immense: here it is in its most extended operation, in universal sway over matter. Rightly didst thou conjecture that thy small portion was not the only nor the highest degree of mind: as thy body is less than a point, when compared to the whole material creation, so, in proportion, is thy mind to the Spirit of the universe.

Whence came the human mind?—Not out of granite, nor ferns, nor ichthyosauri. History and observation, and even imagination, utterly fail to evolve man out of the polypus, whether through the dog, the elephant, or the ape.\* Yet man and his mind do exist, and no effect is without a cause. Had Adam ancestors without a beginning? Geology answers, No. Was there ever a time, hidden in bygone ages, when the human mind *began* to be? Then something caused it, and this cause must have contained something corresponding to the powers in the effect. For mind could not spring out of imperceptive matter; nor could imperceptive matter, of its own accord, ever begin to think. At whatever date we find the commencement of the human mind, some kind of mind must have existed before it; this in its turn, if not itself eternal, must have been preceded also by mind; and thus must mind, in some form, have been eternal. Let thinking beings trace back their pedigree, and they will find it always run in the family of thought. The ancestral research confirms the discovery which just now thou hast made in nature; there, were the indications of a mind in some manner *resembling* and *related to* thine own. Stretch thy sight over the line of thy progenitors.

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\* See Lyell's Geology, book iii. chap. i., ii.

into past eternity, and there thou seest in dim remoteness a Father of Spirits.

But, again, where and what is this causing Mind, which reason forces us to acknowledge, but which glides away when we seek to personify it? The angelic form riding on the whirlwind,—the Spirit moving on the face of the waters,—the invisible Potentate sitting amidst the stars,—are merely more refined creations of poor human fancy, endeavouring to bring the ideal before our senses. The Causing Mind will not be embodied, nor be known to us otherwise than as an abstraction. It communicates itself to us by its works; but the works are not itself. Is it therefore less a reality? Consider if we have no other and familiar instance of an abstraction which we count as a reality; something which cannot be seen, heard, smelt, tasted, nor felt, but which we yet recognize as an indubitable existence? Yes, the mind of man; we know it only by seeing the movement of various parcels of matter, and receiving certain vibrations of the air. These movements and these vibrations are not the mind; yet we are so well satisfied with the perception which from them we obtain of another's mind, that we regard it as a real existence, and address to it our thoughts, affections, and sympathies. See the movements and vibrations pervading all nature, and thence be equally satisfied of the existence of the Divine Mind.

What if we were obliged to admit, O Materialist, that the human mind is only a mode of action of certain parcels of matter called the brain! The human mind is not a whit the less, on that account, a delightful reality, nor all the sensations called mental,—thought, feeling, and imagination, springing within ourselves, or awakened by the approach of similar natures, the less real. Grant, then, for a moment, that the Divine Mind is some principle indissolubly connected with, and not manifesting itself apart from, matter. It is no less a reality, and, like our



own, no less the object of thought and feeling, than if it were an immaterial essence sitting alone in an universe which contained no material atom.

God is not seen, and therefore is not! Grovelling logic, contradicted by every thought of man which rises but a few degrees above his mere sensual nature! Have we not faculties wherewith to contemplate the unseen; by which this becomes to us, in numberless forms, a reality the highest and dearest? Honour is not the note which discharges a debt, nor fame the applauding crowd, nor love the outstretched hand and welcoming smile. But out of the most refined visible manifestation arises something more refined and subtile still, the abstraction which our senses cannot grasp, but which the mind welcomes as the reality towards which it was unconsciously working its ascent from the things of mere sense. The five senses are but a small part of man; mere channels to supply the material out of which his incomprehensible mechanism elaborates abstractions to feed his higher nature. Hardly equal to the brutes, if he could merely see, hear, smell, taste, and touch,—he becomes a god when he is able to understand, admire, love, and venerate. Poor is the noblest material form, if it reach only to the senses; but out of those material particles, in themselves so dull and vile, arises the ideal essence of the sublime, the love-worthy, or the beautiful, which touches the mind into higher life, and which is the only reality it cares to bear away. The human form itself, in highest perfection, soon ceases to interest, unless it give rise to those abstractions which form our most subtile delight; but where these are, we can love and admire, although the unseen form be to us the same as not existing. Who does not make to himself a reality, and an object of affections, of the unseen agent of generous and benevolent deeds, even though the few cubic feet of substance which compose his form, and any visible



manifestation connected with them, should never reach him? So accustomed are we to treat abstractions as realities, that it seldom occurs to us that the existence of the historical personage is the more doubtful, because the historian has not supplied us with the means of defining his visible form. To which of the two is Cæsar more a reality; to the Roman slave who saw a human form, resembling many others, in the triumphal car and toga; or to the reader of to-day, who has followed the accomplished, vain, and ambitious conqueror from the plains of Gaul to the foot of Pompey's statue? Nor need we appeal so far as to history. Are not those unseen ones, whose thoughts alone, reaching to us, stir up in us a high and intense life;—are they not to us realities a thousand times more interesting than the mere visible forms, the acquaintances of eye and ear, which cross our every-day path?

What, though our minds be not always tuned to this high pitch, and often sink down from abstractions to the basis of things material and sensible out of which they arise,—they cannot remain there long, but feel gradually borne up by their nature into higher action. Not alone does the poet or the philosopher seek for the ideal as a part of his mind's needful aliment. The peasant and the artisan also seek more than the things which they see and handle; and catch gladly at those words and sounds which give them the glimmering of another kind of life, the life of the fantasy. Hence has superstition been able to maintain her sway so stoutly in defiance of common sense, by allying herself with powers to which man by nature owed a grateful and willing allegiance. The religious fable or absurdity has been suffered to pass unquestioned, for the sake of the grace, faith, or spiritual influence by which it has invited men to the action of their higher faculties. And possibly this action, even when somewhat diseased and in excess, was less injurious

than the total death of man's ideal and spiritual nature. But cannot reason also form an alliance with this; or must we acknowledge that in proportion to the dominion of reason, man must restrict himself to the exercise of his senses, and admit as fact and reality their acquaintances alone? This cannot be; Nature bids us refuse to lower our standard to the capabilities of those whom she intended to be mere door-keepers to the mind, and urges us to receive all that higher world of ideas which follow the impressions of sense, welcoming them as the congenial companions and best friends of reason.

Are abstractions, then, delightful realities of the mind in its highest exercise? Then God speaks to us by means of our highest faculties; and who would wish that he had spoken otherwise? The being who has senses alone goes into nature, and finds only herbs, waters, sky, and planets. The being who has also intellect, imagination, and affections, cannot see these without finding also the Mind of the Universe.

Doubly pleasing does nature become when reason has once satisfied us that she is authorized to respond to the heart. The mind of the First Cause speaks to us through his works. Matter, inorganic and organic! How poor and mean nature seemed when this was all we could see in her! but now we begin to penetrate farther, and find that these forms were but the outward expression of something higher than themselves. The loneliness felt amidst heaps of insentientcy, however splendidly arrayed, disappears as soon as we begin to distinguish the voice of Intelligence which speaks through them. Mind caused them, exists amidst them, and speaks by them. Each object becomes more than a spectacle; it is the medium of communication from a mind. The wild flower which we scarcely notice, the satellite which we disregard amidst the brilliancy of the sky, would tell us volumes, if they were all in the external world to which we had

access. But from the stores of the Parent Cause these would be but penurious epistles; and he conveys his meaning in a richly variegated earth, and a boundless firmament.

With this Scripture we may be well content; and knowing that here it is appointed for us to learn all we can and ought to know of God, his nature, and his will, cease to regret the loss of that strange existence which made a capricious covenant with Abraham, or of the voice which delivered to Moses moral precepts, intermingled with directions concerning the fringe of the tabernacle and knobs of the candlestick, or of the Being who declared himself at one time long suffering and gracious, and at another denounced heavy punishments for sparing the wives and children of the vanquished. A more refined conception followed these, in so far as man's expanding mind began to catch the tone and spirit of nature. But nature is more durable than man's words, whether conveyed through other men's memories, or by paper and parchment. We can appeal to her direct, without help from any translator or expounder, besides our own head and heart. The God whom she proclaims is a certainty in a far higher degree than any God revealed to us through distant records, for the pledges of his existence are the things around us and within us every moment, free from all suspicion of forgery, delusion, or imposture.

And what does this elder, but ever fresh, Scripture teach concerning the character of the Creating Mind? Is there aught in it, besides intelligence, which betokens kindred to our own? How does the intelligence employ itself, and towards what objects does it tend? That of man is combined with other faculties and tastes, and exercises itself in the directions to which these point. He loves to explore the properties of figure and number, and to make these properties subservient to his purposes



in combining material things; he delights in sweet sounds and graceful forms, and deems it no small part of reason's task to promote the gratification of the eye and the ear; and above all, his intelligence finds a necessity of being in action of some kind amongst the material things which surround it. Does the Divine Intelligence resemble the human in any of these respects? or does it operate towards objects altogether incomprehensible to man, foreign to his tastes, bearing no parallel to his aims, and no relation to his faculties? A range through nature soon leads to the pleasing discovery, that the Creative Intelligence is combined also with something corresponding to the senses, tastes, and imagination of man. He finds not a strange and repulsive creation which jars harshly upon his own nature, but one which accords wonderfully with it. To whatever side he turns, nature presents something to harmonize with his faculties, and he feels himself in a father-land. Earth and skies reveal a conceptive Painter, a skilful Musician, a deep Geometrician, a sure Architect, and, whether in these or other forms, an ever-active mind.\*

In some things mankind cannot approach the perfection displayed in nature. The problem of the three bo-

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\* Man appears to have certain determinate faculties, which may be modified by the action of external things, but can neither be entirely created nor destroyed by it. Therefore the pleasure which he takes in nature indicates an agreement or harmony between his appetencies and external things, and not the necessary derivation of the former from the latter. Persons who have been excluded from their birth from natural scenery, experience a lively pleasure when at last introduced to it. It is quite conceivable that man and external nature should have been constituted so that the latter might produce an unpleasing effect upon the whole or the greater part of the faculties of the former; therefore the agreement or harmony alluded to, unless we call it a coincidence, demands some explanation.



dies occupied the ablest mathematicians of Europe for many years, and Clairaut was only able to solve it approximately. Yet how much more complicated must be the problems to be solved in order to balance millions of systems!\* With respect to sounds and colours also, the artificial seldom equal the natural in sweetness or vividness. But in some cases, as in the collocation of the parts of a landscape, or in the combination of sounds into a concert, art seems able to improve upon nature. Remembering that man himself is a part of the latter, we should hence conclude, that, in some cases, God exhibits a higher degree of skill out of us, and in other cases through us.

Whether it be true or not, that in some particular cases man is able to do better than what he finds already done in nature, the general fact, that the material creation is such as to delight his faculties, remains indisputable; and, looking at the whole, few would admit that any human mind could ever produce such a magnificent and beautiful conception. There is a boldness or freedom of style in the Divine works which strikes the imagination, independently of size and extent. God is not a formalist who draws only in parallel lines, perfect curves, and similar figures. This he can do where it conduces to utility, as in the cellular tissues, the spider's

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\* The hypothesis, that the matter scattered throughout the heavens must, during eternity, have time to fall into all possible combinations, and therefore must at last hit upon one of the few which would balance the universe, although not absolutely impossible, is too violent to be admitted, without strong support from facts. No record, either through intelligent beings or material things, has reached us of that enormous period when Nature was making her unsuccessful experiments. The earliest geological epochs appear to be parts of a regular plan of progression. The hypothesis referred to is totally unsupported by that which forms the basis of the argument for an Intelligent Cause, viz. fact and analogy.

web, the cells of bees, and in the members of the body which exist in pairs. He can be most minute in regularity, for the earth never varies a minute in the time of its rotation, nor does the radius vector of any planet describe an inch more or less of area in equal times. Yet, where no purpose of utility appears to be promoted by regularity, he prefers the variety of seeming chance. The stars are scattered throughout the firmament, so that no area in space can be matched with its duplicate; yet who does not confess that the confusion which allows the imagination to form the wild group of Orion, the Centaur, the Lion, and all their fellow mystic forms, emblems of scientific facts, or representations of the fables which sprung from the fancy of the young human race,—that this wild collocation exceeds in sublime effect the most regular corniced temple-ceiling into which the Divine Artificer might have marked out the sky? And who that sees from some eminence the beautiful confusion of rocks, sea, meadows, and woods, assembled in no definable proportion or plan, would wish that the Designer had preferred to arrange the components of his landscapes with the regularity of tessellated pavements?

But this is mere trifling, compared with the deeper query which the heart longs to put to nature. Is the universal mind Ormusd or Ahriman? For, with all that she has yet said, he might still be an all-powerful refined tormentor. The wise and skilful we may admire; but the benevolent we confide in and love. There has been, and is, much that seems evil; when she is clearly understood, what will be the final translation of her sentence—that good, evil, a compromise, or a neutrality, is the rule of the universe? If the Persian had been told so much of the future, as that the progress of knowledge would prove it impossible for two principles to reign jointly in the universe, since each successive investigation of nature shewed more and more

the unity of design, from the lowest gulf of the Caspian to the star which hardly twinkles beside Aldebaran, how would he desire to ask the further question, which of the two principles would advancing knowledge recognize as the predominant, and whether Ormusd or Ahriman would be dissipated by science into a non-entity! He might, perhaps, have anticipated the answer, but with some trembling. Three thousand years enable us to anticipate the final decision of nature with tranquillity. The study of matter and mind has proved, that so much of what was called evil is the necessary means of preventing the destruction of our physical frame, or of promoting the life of our moral nature, that we look securely for the further results of science as to what remains of evil unexplained.\* Since the more intently men have looked at nature, the more of evil has appeared to change into goodness of a different hue, we must anticipate that a perfect revelation will shew the seeming blots which remain, to be in reality harmonizing features in a scene of beneficence. Thus relieved with respect to these darker passages of nature, we are at liberty to rejoice in her general clear and easy language of joyous suns, smiling earth, bodies replete with agreeable sensations, and sights and tones innumerable which breathe peace or delight. Thus in abundant eloquence she declares that neither malevolence nor indifference has presided over the creation of all things, but that benevolence was, in some unaccountable way, the predominant attribute of the Causing Mind.

Might it not have been otherwise? Is there any latent self-contradiction in the supposition that the order of things might have been such as to give as much pain, or as little pleasure, as was consistent with continuation?—that life and reproduction should have been enforced by pain,

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\* See Combe's Constitution of Man.



rather than persuaded by pleasure; and that a miserable world, or a dull world, should have been compelled to drag on for millions of ages, in order to supply a necessary link of the great whole? It is conceivable: why was it not so? We cannot tell; but we can rejoice in the actual reality. A common-place phrase is it,—the beneficent order of things. But to Adam, just created, it would have been a thrilling discovery. Pause sometimes, all sons of Adam, and rejoice to think upon the good luck, or fortunate necessity, or whatever other name seems best to suit the incomprehensible fate which made goodness predominant in the universe which holds you.

The creating Intelligence, which all nature had revealed, is also beneficent. Delightful discovery! Then can man repose securely and trust implicitly. For the rest, his weak understanding need not perplex itself more than for diversion and exercise. When, strong and active, his mind is restless for employment, let it seek farther into the nature of God and the destiny of man; but when, weary and troubled, it needs repose, let it sink contented upon faith—the clear and easy faith which a beautiful universe has revealed, a benevolent God. What is there further which will not readily grow out of this? From this one article, reason will easily deduce as many as the varying circumstances of each individual may require, and more than thirty-nine of good comfort will be found, confirmed by nature to be of sound orthodoxy.

Benevolence is one of the characteristics which most please us in the human mind. By examining the works of nature, it appears to have been a principle inherent in the First Cause. May we not, then, hope that some of the other sentiments of the human mind have in the First Cause something responding to them? Whether the sentiment be a primitive faculty of the mind, or whether it grows out of its constitution acted upon by other things, it must have had in the original Source of



mind a cause answering to it. If mind could have proceeded from nothing but mind, then the qualities of mind must have proceeded from a cause having some kindred or resembling qualities. Benevolence could not have been made a component of human nature by a cause essentially malevolent. Then also justice, sense of duty, honour, affection, have something responding to them in the cause of man's mind.\*

Thus do our mental powers, ranging through nature, discover an existence which rises in sublimity and interest the more they look upon it. By steady contemplation the wondrous abstraction assumes form. The great idea is filled up; whilst the reality of external nature perpetually reminds us that we behold, not our own reflection, but an independent existence.† One by one, qualities throng upon it, until it becomes an entity readily appreciable by thought. It becomes a personality so real, that imagination is almost tempted to add more. The Creative Intelligence, the mighty Geometrician, and conceptive Artist, is also Benevolent; and if so much as all this, he can surely understand and appreciate whatever else enters into the composition of humanity. Then may virtue, endeavouring to imitate him, hope that there is in the universe a

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\* It might be objected, that this kind of argument would also prove that there are counterparts of man's bad qualities in the Divine Mind. But modern philosophy tends to prove, that the mind has no original bad qualities. Vices are the results of qualities in themselves good, and in harmony with nature, but misdirected, or in excess, owing to defective knowledge. It seems, indeed, not at all improbable, that all primitive faculties in the human mind have some counterpart in the First Cause, although the manifestation of them should be different, owing to its different mode of existence.

† Dante relates, in the Paradise, that the Deity appeared to him under the figure of three circles, forming an iris, whose lively colours generated each other; but that, looking steadily upon the dazzling light, he saw only his own figure.

secret response of approbation, more sure and discerning than that of men ; then may humble unseen worth, persevering from a sense of duty in painful struggles, which the ordination of progress has rendered inevitable to many children of earth, retire frequently to seek refreshment from sympathies in nature, compassion, exhortation, and encouragement, expressed in tones which the ear is now attuned to perceive ; and if sometimes, stimulated into more keen perception by sorrow, the soul realizes the awful consoling Presence so nearly, that it more than meditates,—can reason condemn ?

Honoured be the spirits which have anticipated such religion of nature, and depicted the Cause of the universe in this attractive form. The lower feelings found in the godhead a mere Jupiter Tonans, a vindictive and jealous tyrant of heaven, the partial protector of a family or chosen nation. But more enlarged thought and higher feeling described him as the King and Father of men, Jupiter greatest and best. Especially honoured be he who loved to contemplate, and to address, the unseen Mind as the Father in heaven, hearing and having compassion on all men ; and who taught men to avail themselves of this refuge for sorrow. Whatever else he were, he was one of those who have helped to raise and refine, as well as to strengthen, human nature. Philosophy sitting calmly in the schools, or walking at ease in the groves, could not do all that men require ; the despised Galilean, with his religion of sorrow, gave strength where philosophy left them weak, and completed the armour of the mind. It was reserved for a persecuted man of a persecuted nation to open the divine depths of sorrow, and to direct men towards the hidden riches of their nature in abysses where, at the first entrance, all appeared barren gloom.

The various systems of religion, or schools of philosophy, which have pre-eminently attracted men's attention, have all contributed something to a complete moral

creed. Each has brought into view some great principle which, although not unknown, had never before been placed in so striking a light. Jesus Christ has added to philosophy the principle of regarding the Supreme Mind as an object of the affections. In suffering and adversity chiefly, this principle comes to be felt as a valuable part of philosophy. In these conditions, it may be questioned if any system, without this, can produce perfect tranquillity, free from apathy. Acquiescence in the decrees of fate or necessity is not enough for a being compounded of imaginations and affections, as well as intellect; the principle suits his whole nature, when raised into submission to the will of a beneficent paternal mind. In this, Jesus wants not the attestation of supernatural voices and signs; he has held up to men a doctrine which nature, when earnestly appealed to, fully sanctions.

Does the adorer still sometimes sigh for a contemplation of the Deity, requiring less strain upon his intellectual nature, and exclaim, O that the Invisible would become flesh, and dwell among us, so that we might see his form and hear his voice, full of grace and truth! or that, at least, he would condescend so far to the weakness of beings in whom sense forms a large part, as to send amongst them some emanating intelligence, his likeness and representative, in a human form! Reflect, thou art asking only what he has already done. Man's mind came out of the all-comprehending cause. Some examples of it exhibit, in no low degree, the attributes which are revealed in creation. In the good and the wise of earth, behold many Incarnations of deity. Be thyself one of them. Wherever thou findest the pure, the energetic, and the love-worthy, fall down in thy own mind and adore the god-like. In this accessible form thou wilt frequently find the godhead walking in the garden, joining at the social board, talking with thee face to face. Avail thyself freely of this familiar channel of recognition



and adoration ; by love and reverence for the moral, pay to the Source of Good an easy daily praise ; nor fear, by worship of the God on earth, to disparage the God in heaven.

The history of six thousand years exhibits continual stretchings of man after the invisible ; and according to the state of mind and manners, these have manifested themselves in superstition, fanaticism, religion, or philosophy. Away with the cant that the idea of a God is only the work of priestcraft ; the priests might have availed themselves of what was already in the mind of man, but no priests could have artifice enough to plant there, and cause to grow for ages, what was totally uncongenial to it. Men would have risen sooner against each priestly annoyance, but that they felt the power of unseen realities speaking to them in a voice more forcible than that of bulls and ordinances,—the voice of their reason and of their inmost wants, hopes, and affections. And it has been the art of priests to appear as the allies and visible representatives of these potent influences, and to pretend to minister to those wants of men, which by slow degrees they learn to satisfy direct from nature's fountain. Yet do the strange shapes which the religious sentiment has so frequently assumed, all contain a truth which compels lamentation or laughter to end in some kind of reverence. He may be wanting in perceptions, who can refrain from a smile at some of the abrupt passages which the mixture called human nature has often made in religion as well as other things, from the sublime to the ridiculous ; and especially at the impotent conclusion, of the highest aspirations of man being reduced to the poor commonplace of subserving the necessity which some appear to be under of imposing, and others of being imposed upon. But he is equally or more wanting in perceptions, who can see only these in the history of religion, nor discern, amidst various absurd disguises invented by human folly,



an identical fair form of truth, of which the reality and character are spoken to by the constitution of man's mind and of nature. The conceptions of Deity in rude ages must necessarily be lower than in periods of mental refinement; yet, in many of them, we may find the alloy to consist of sentiments which, though not the highest, are neither unworthy nor unnatural. The most philosophic religionist may feel at times the necessity of bringing the Universal Mind, as it were, into that comparatively narrow circle wherein the most active feelings generally find their play, and contemplating it in reference to family, friends, or country. By him the appellations the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who hath led our fathers through the wilderness, will be regarded as happy modes of bringing the Mighty Incorporeal within the compass of a rude nation's affections and comprehension. Nor will he refuse to lend himself to the associations which the history of Israel, their poetry and music, and also that of Christendom, have connected with the name of the God of Judah, and King of Zion. In all the forms not absolutely revolting or ludicrous, in which the domestic or patriotic feelings of tribes and nations have allied themselves with the religious, will the benignant philosopher find matter for sympathy and approval, rather than of derision; he will enter into the associations of time and place which have rendered such forms interesting and powerful, relax his abstract truths into these poetical and familiar representations, and regard the propensity to fall into them as an amiable, rather than absurd, trait in imperfect human nature.

But, although poetical, historical, and antiquarian interest may preserve, in different nations, partial representations of the Deity for a long time after the belief in the Divine sanction of such representations has ceased,—the tendency of advancing knowledge must be gradually

to abandon these imperfect conceptions, and to prefer that infinitely more enlarged one which progressive thought opens. As the name of Israel is to us now, so will Christendom and Christianity be to our descendants of future generations. As to us the God of Abraham, and the God of Israel, appear too limited designations for the Divine Existence, so to them will appear the names of the Father of Christ, and the God of the Christians. All representations of the Deity depending upon the preservation of human records will be felt to be comparatively unsatisfactory and unsubstantial. But Nature will always be a present grand reality, and the Intelligence which presides throughout nature must be an ever-present reality also. The God of Nature, revealed in greater clearness by each step of physical and mental science, is He whom the Jew, the Christian, the Mahometan, and the Hindoo will at last unite to worship. In the plenitude of philosophic charity, which future centuries are to develope, these may all, in turn, join each other in the peculiar ancient worship of each. Where painting, poetry, or music, may have consecrated the old, imperfect, and partial conceptions of each nation, the enlightened religionist of after-times will find no impediment to his free sympathy in the reminiscences of his neighbours. The Hindoo scholar may repeat with pleasure the praises of the God of Israel, preserved in the relics of Hebrew poetry; the Mahometan musician will not be offended at finding the Deity continually represented as the Father of Jesus Christ in the finest devotional compositions of Christendom; whilst the Jewish or Christian poet will treat with equal candour the strains in honour of Brama. The secondary feelings connected with the religious peculiarities of each clime will be treated, on all sides, with that respectful consideration which true philosophy inspires; whilst all will rejoice together in their respective emancipations from the more galling fetters of their sup-

posed Special Revelations, and meet in full and free communion of thought on the common ground of Nature's Revelation. Religion will at last, like Science, become a point of union, instead of a bar of separation, to the minds of different nations. When it is found that the real Bible, or book in which God reveals himself, has been given equally to all, and that he has already taken care to place it in clear print before every nation, there can be no room for the overweening assumption of exclusive possession of divine truth ; and that generous zeal for others' spiritual welfare, which, in a great measure, wastes itself in misdirected missionary exertions, will find an aim more rational and more practicable, in international efforts to promote moral, intellectual, and social improvement.

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The distinction between God's works and God's word no longer exists. They are the same. His works are his word. No longer need the mind which seeks its Creator be cramped within the limits of a written volume. O thou, whose earliest conceptions of a creative intelligence awakened by the sight of a wonderful world, and, seeking for further expansion, have been directed to the so-called word of God as the proper fountain of this high knowledge, where this sublimest ardour was to be satisfied, and the great idea fully developed,—hast thou never experienced something like disappointment, when, turning wearily over many pages of the boasted revelation, thou hast found but little to respond to thy nascent desires of truth, and timidly, half self-accusing, asked thyself, Can this really be that loudly extolled book of Revelation, which is to instruct men fully concerning God and his ways ? Is it indeed so superior to the instruction of nature, that it deserves to be called pre-eminently the Word of God ? I find here and there high thoughts and beautiful conceptions, which shew that between the Nile and the



Euphrates, as well as elsewhere, men possessed a nature capable of being moved occasionally to the contemplation of the mighty Cause of heaven and earth; but do these ancient writers really impart knowledge concerning him beyond the reach of all other sages, and speak in strains unequalled by any other muse? \* Alas! they seldom sustain my mind long in that high region which it was seeking; but drag it down into an earthly atmosphere of low trifling thoughts, petty local interests, and individual or national resentments. This, the book to which stupendous Nature itself was only the preface!—which the Creator of sun and skies has thought it worth while to attest by special messages and inspirations! Neither its genealogies, histories, nor poems, satisfy my want. The spirit of adoration seems to be, by long perusal of this volume, excluded from the great temple of the universe, and compressed into the holy ark of Israel, or into an upper chamber at Jerusalem. Can this book really be the highest field of human study and thought? There must be some mistake.

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\* Compare Psalms xix. and Isaiah xl. with Young's Night Thoughts, chap. ix. :—

“Where ends this mighty building? Where begin  
 The suburbs of creation? Where the wall  
 Whose battlements look o’er into the vale  
 Of non-existence? Nothing’s strange abode!  
 Say, at what point of space Jehovah dropp’d  
 His slackened *line*, and laid his *balance* by;  
 Weighed *worlds*, and measured *infinite*, no more!  
 Where rears his *terminating pillar* high  
 Its extra-mundane head? and says to gods,  
 In characters illustrious as the sun,  
 ‘I stand, the plan’s proud period; I pronounce  
 The work accomplished; the creation closed:  
 Shout, all ye gods! nor shout, ye gods, alone;  
 Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life,  
 That rests, or rolls, ye heights and depths, resound!’ ”



Rejoice, and set thy mind free; there has been a great mistake. The book, as well as thyself, was injured by the false pretensions set up on its behalf; and the workings of the *Human* mind in remote ages, in themselves deeply interesting, rendered ridiculous by being extolled into oracles of the *Divine*. Cease to weary thyself in following Israel through the desert, and in pondering each supposed weighty sentence of prophets and apostles. Neither Moses nor Samuel, Isaiah nor Zechariah, not Jesus, nor Paul, nor John, can speak more of God than they themselves have learned from the sources which he has placed within the reach of all, nature and man's own mind. But look up and around, and say if man may not be well satisfied with these; and if in Orion and the Pleiades, in the green earth and its copious productions, and especially in the Godlike Human Mind itself, manifested in art, science, poetry, and action, God has not provided eloquent and intelligible evangelists.

True, they tell me that he is; but his Will! where shall I find this, if the book of revelation be renounced; where find rules of conduct of sufficient sanction to render the mind free and trustful in its course through life? Reflecting man cannot live a mere animal, catching whatever good fate or chance throws to him from day to day; he must ask himself sometimes, what is the End of his being, and is he living for that End? Different lines of conduct seem to lie open before him; which shall he choose,—virtue or vice, benevolent or selfish gratification? The omnipotent Designer must have intended man to fulfil some part in his great plan: if man could penetrate into the divine designs, and learn what this plan was, or at least obtain a word of guidance from the Creator's lips, he might proceed surely. Conformity to the will of an arranger so wise as he who made the world, must be for the best interests of man and of all things.

Nor will this question be asked of Nature in vain.

Through her God speaks his will, as well as his existence, in language of inimitable force and clearness. Here also it is the language of facts. He speaks his commands to man in a manner so impressive, that they cannot be neglected, whether they be recognized as his or not. This emphatic language is *Pleasure* and *Pain*. By the former he persuades, by the latter he deters. "Do this" is spoken so that none can refuse; "thus far shalt thou go," and "thou shalt not," are enforced in sentences which the deaf must hear, viz., in Nature's sharp penalties for disobedience.

Here then is the true Table of God's Commandments; the *natural consequences of actions*; the happiness or misery which result respectively from different lines of conduct, according to the constitution of ourselves and of things around: a table written, indeed, with the finger of God, but which no Moses can throw down and break; for it is interwoven with the universe itself, and shares its stability. Let him who desires to know the will of God study well this great table, and in no particular will he find it deficient or ambiguous.

It is true that this Table is so constructed as to teach by experience rather than by warning. Each forbidden fruit does not prevent our tasting it by sharp pains to the palate; but by after-pain it declares itself to be within the prohibited list. Man seems thus to be designedly exposed to some evil. Unlike an over-fond parent, who fears lest her charge should receive the slightest hurt, Nature gives mankind a rough education, and allows them unscrupulously to receive many hurts before they attain their majority. Man's infancy of six thousand years has abounded with disasters; yet Nature has looked on unmoved, tranquilly confident in the ultimate success of her plan; in evidence of which we see she now points to her charge, upon the whole healthy and vigorous, notwithstanding his past troubles, rendered partially wise

and reflective in consequence of them, and shewing a strength of constitution in body and mind which allows the hope of a manhood of perfection.

Is Nature really unkind in preferring this rigorous system of teaching by experience? and do we wish that God had rather made her the minutely solicitous nurse, always warning in time, to prevent our incurring the least physical or moral hurt? Then we might have been entirely unscathed by evil, and for ever safe in leading-strings. But whence should we obtain all those things which seem to be the necessary results of hard experience alone;—patience, fortitude, circumspection, activity of thought, and the full appreciation of pleasure? All these truly are worth something, and help much to make man the being whom we love and respect. Perhaps they are equal in value to that secure invulnerability which we might have had in the total absence of evil,—perhaps more. Should we dare to risk the loss of this moral grandeur, and all that results from it, by accepting, in exchange for this world, one in which evil had never been permitted to appear,—a world already cleared of evil for man, instead of one which he is to clear for himself? The choice would be too hazardous; we might lose more than we should gain: possibly it was neither oversight nor want of benevolence in the Creator, that he allowed the trees both of Good and of Evil to grow within the reach of unrestrained man.

Wonderful and ingenious is the method devised for guiding man into the course which he was intended to fulfil, and at the same time allowing him that range of faculties and action, which contributes to the interest and greatness of his being! Not an enchaining automaton-producing instinct; but Pleasure or Happiness attached to some actions, Pain or Misery to others. How simple the contrivance! yet what a vast machinery of sensations in man and adaptations to external nature did it require!



The Natural Consequences of actions become, then, the Scriptures of God's will concerning the conduct of man. Deeply interesting is the study of this volume, for we read it in every action of our lives, and in all that men and nations enjoy or suffer. Even he who will not himself attend to the meaning, becomes an illustration of it to others. But with the happiness and misery of life the sense must glide more or less into every mind.

Why have mankind profited so little by this volume, that from generation to generation they continue to read again and again the same dark pages of immoderate indulgence, unrestrained passions, and their attendant evils, without going on to those abundant pages of pleasurable experiences to which these difficult passages were to be merely the preparation? Whence this strange inattention? From men's inadvertence to the deep and solemn object of all the Pains and Pleasures to which their minds and bodies are subject; viz., that these are to make known to them God's will, and guide them into the course designed for them. But they have supposed pains and pleasures to be accidents, or mere arbitrary distributions, and have looked every where else for the declaration of God's will; in dreams, or visions, or special messengers from heaven, or supernatural inspirations, or volumes of human compilation pretending to contain the precious oracles. Man's attention has been so engrossed with these loud boasting, counterfeit revelations, that he has neglected Nature, although ever speaking with her own quiet impressiveness through his own feelings and the order of things.

But now lift up thine eyes, free from those illusions which have been so long confusing the sight of mankind, and devote thy hitherto misdirected energies to discover God's will in his own revelation of it. Here also he adopts a magnificent mode of teaching, the feelings of man and the order of events. Thou wilt soon learn his



style in this matter, as well as in the revelation of his existence. 'Tis easier, after all, than the study of Koran, Shasters, Zendavesta, or Bible. Thou wilt sooner discover the tendency of thine actions, and the pleasurable-ness or painfulness of thy own feelings, than the genuineness and meaning of Hebrew, Greek, or Persic texts. Hast thou ever felt delight in the exercise of thy senses, in the fragrance of the rose and violet, in autumn's fruits, in the freshness of the winding stream beneath overhanging trees, or in the inviting depths of the wood? God commands thee to enjoy all this. Hast thou ever felt the bodily prostration or mental death following upon too long-continued luxurious ease? Then God prohibits this. Hast thou ever found enjoyment in the kindly intercourse with men, in the interchange of good offices, or in the mutual communication of thought and experience, gaiety and wisdom? God commands this. Hast thou ever felt misery from yielding to suspicion, reserve, distrust, and uncharitableness? The prohibition is clear. Hast thou ever found delight in knowledge, in evolving the surprising properties of numbers and quantity, in exploring the history of earth and its productions, in penetrating the firmament and gaining a bird's-eye view of the universe, or in roving through the luxuriance of books? All this God sanctions. Or hast thou sometimes had a sense of a purer delight, and felt the awakening of a new and higher life in the love of moral beauty, the admiration of noble actions, the feeling of disinterested benevolence, the desire to direct all other tastes and powers towards the service of mankind, and to imitate the perfection in heaven by doing good to all sentient creatures? If ever thou hast been convinced that from such feelings proceed a real and substantial delight, then be sure that God approves of these.

But the sufferers for conscience' sake! O plausible semi-epicurean, what shall we say of these? This;—that

they prefer the higher pleasure to the lower, and would not exchange the consciousness of moral worth, of fellowship with the good, and of closer connexion with more than earth, for things, to them, of inferior value. If the bargain seem to any too hard, 'tis nature's indication that they may rest contented with the secondary grade of admiring what they cannot imitate. Yet history shews that, whenever occasion has called for it, numbers have not been found wanting to rush into the foremost rank of Virtue, testifying by their alacrity that some minds are so constituted as to find her rewards a reality.\*

With the increasing general improvement of mankind, occasions of this kind will be less and less frequent. Virtue will not be called upon for those high efforts, in which the exaltation of noble feelings must compensate for inconvenience, neglect, and suffering. The general constitution of human nature indicates that virtue is intended to co-exist with the enjoyment of the common blessings of life. The martyr's reward must be considered as an extraordinary provision to meet an extraordinary case; but the more tranquil satisfactions of virtue will be the more permanent. Those generous spirits

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\* The possibility, at least, of a future state, cannot be disproved. It is one of the rewards of virtue to reflect, that, in the disposition to create and diffuse good, the mind has acquired a high degree of resemblance to the Divine nature, and that the likeness may include the partaking of its immortality. Thus, although the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be not held as a dogma, the contemplation of it may diffuse a high additional interest to man's existence; and this contemplation becomes most earnest and pleasing to the virtuous sufferer.

Every thing which tends to shew that this contemplation is natural and necessary to the mind, especially amongst the good, tends to prove also the reality of a future state; because the healthy working of human feelings is not found, in other cases, to lead to delusions.

were made for their age; but the last times will behold a world, not of martyrs, but of happiness-enjoying and happiness-giving brethren.

To study the means of *leading a happy life* has been supposed to be the province of philosophy; to ascertain the *will of God*, that of religion. They unite. Too long has the minister of sacred things stood aloof from the moralist, the philosopher, the political economist, as from labourers in a different sphere from his own. Too long has he considered himself as standing apart, and omitted to see that the investigator of Nature in all its provinces is really employed in evolving and translating those texts of God's mighty book, from which he himself is to draw for men ennobling and consoling thoughts. Especially is the philosopher, who investigates the means of individual and national happiness, a fellow-labourer with the religionist; for he is engaged in exploring the will of God where alone it can be found. Behold, then, religion and philosophy unite; they blend into one serene form, delightful to both the intellect and the heart. Christianity, throwing off the contracted look of superstition and exclusive saintship, issues from cathedrals and conventicles, and learns to walk in academic groves and gardens, with free unbending air, and in courteous equality with all mankind.

Shades of Athenian Sages! receive at length with friendly arms your Ally of Nazareth: Reason, after eighteen centuries of labour, has prepared you all to meet each other. Go forth with him into nature's vast lyceum in friendly communion, instructing, correcting, ennobling each other. Let his devotional nature shed upon your researches that high and holy hue which was wanting to render philosophy omnipotent over men's affections, as well as their understanding;—the recognition of the Soul of the World as a principle bearing close relationship to man's heart, and beaming forth through all material things



to the intellectual eye. Let his benign spirit dissolve your proud contempt for the crowd, and dispose you to throw open your philosophic stores to all your brethren of mankind. And he, in his turn, will hear all that you can tell, gathered by deep thought and patient industry from the history of nature and of man, nor refuse to search further with you into the elder universal scripture for all that may reveal God and benefit man.

These latter ages realize the vision. Plato, Epicurus, Cicero, Aristotle, live again in the profound thinkers and patient explorers of modern ages. And whatever was most admirable in the Galilean lives again in the frank benevolence, warm imagination, and unassuming devotion of many a generous, as well as religious, spirit. No longer need they be practically divided by seeking their respective materials of thought in different directions. The works and word of God are the same. They will find themselves inevitably at each other's side, and, exploring in the same field, will soon discover that their objects are alike, and that their spirits may therefore join.

Not altogether fruitless have been the researches already made. The moralist has gathered this result from the experience of mankind, that moderation in all the gratifications of sense, the pursuit of some approved object, the cultivation of the mind's higher powers, and the employment of those powers in such a manner as to bring forth the kindly affections and encourage the love of truth and justice,—that conduct framed according to these rules is the surest means of procuring a happy life to the *individual*, and, at the same time, of promoting the welfare of the *race*. Let but individual man earnestly seek the happiness of his whole nature, and he must of necessity be working towards the happiness of the race. The Creator was not such an inconsistent or unskilful artist as to aim at producing general happiness by a system of individual misery. The character of the means harmo-



nizes with that of the end. The orbit of the smallest satellite obeys the same laws as the widest circle in which systems gravitate.

The self-love which is interwoven with man's constitution will continually impel him to seek happiness of some kind, and advancing knowledge will render more and more necessary the gratification of his moral and intellectual powers. The gratification of his *whole* nature must, in the constituted order of things, tend to the perfection of the race. We begin then to discover a mighty object, worthy of the Framers of nature, in his wonderful apparatus of pleasure and pain, hitherto the most puzzling part of his vast machinery. From amidst the chaos of human error and suffering, we begin to discern glimmerings which announce an Empyrean of beneficent light.

Not yet are we out of the darkness; not yet are self-love and social universally the same. But the general profession, at least, of estimation for the moral sentiments and the pleasures derivable from them, allows us to contemplate the universal verification of the maxim as no impossibility. And when men shall all come to recognize their highest pleasure in diffusing happiness, and shall seek the good of all with as much earnestness as their own; when sincerity shall be as common as profession; and the advanced intellect of mankind be subservient to equally advanced morality;—what a luxuriant scene of happiness may not be anticipated on this earth! General knowledge, united with general benevolence, must banish all relics of crime and misery, and mankind live a happy brotherhood harmoniously occupied in drawing from the earth its copious treasures, exploring further into the secrets of creation, and increasing the stores of mental enjoyment. What may not man become in that happy age?—a being, perhaps, as superior to him of to-day, as the latter is to the preceding occupants of the planet; and then may be further developed

the plan of creation, constituting things so that the happiness of man should be linked with his moral and intellectual progress. Then, whatever joys have been imagined of heaven will be realized upon earth, and a golden age be found to be the result of knowledge, and not of ignorance.\*

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\* The present now is past,  
 And those events that desolate the earth  
 Have faded from the memory of time.  
 . . . . . Futurity  
 Exposes now its treasure: let the sight  
 Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.

. . . . .  
 O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!  
 To which those restless souls, that ceaselessly  
 Throng through the human universe, aspire;  
 Thou consummation of all mortal hope!  
 Thou glorious prize of blindly working will!  
 Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,  
 Verge to one point, and blend for ever there:  
 Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!  
 Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,  
 Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:  
 O happy Earth, reality of heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,  
 And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,  
 Haunting the human heart, have there entwined  
 Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss  
 Where friends and lovers meet to part no more.  
 Thou art the end of all desire and will,  
 The product of all action; and the souls  
 That by the paths of an aspiring change  
 Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace,  
 There rest from the eternity of toil  
 That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

*Shelley's Queen Mab.*

If it be acknowledged that any progress has hitherto been made in social happiness, it must also be admitted that such a state may be indefinitely approached. Thus all who labour in any department with a purpose to promote the improvement of man, are co-operating in the grand scheme of providence, of preparing for the kingdom of Heaven upon Earth. Thus in a wider sense, perhaps, than he himself imagined, and by the sure means of human effort availing itself of nature's resources, are they gradually realizing the conception of Jesus of Nazareth, and promoting the growth of the mustard-seed, till it become a tree in whose branches the birds shall lodge, when the earth shall be possessed by the children of God, and the Son of Man, perfected human nature, descend to reign upon it as from the clouds of heaven.

Well and nobly, then, do the generous benefactors of mankind, of every sect and nation, perform the most urgent command of the Prophet of Nazareth, to go forth and prepare for the Kingdom of heaven. If he could now return to earth, and add to his own generous spirit all that reason and science have accumulated since his day, would he not be proud to be allowed to call these his disciples, and exclaim,—I call you not servants; ye are my friends. That which, in my day, I thought was to be brought about by miracles, wonders, and signs, ye are accomplishing by the surer means which my Father hath provided in his works. More truly are ye thus my disciples, than if ye were to proclaim me most loudly Lord, and vociferate in my behalf a thousand Heathen or Jewish fictions. He that speaketh even against me, it is forgiven him; but he that doeth the will of my Father is my disciple and friend.

And thou, poor child of mortality, who sufferest thy full share of the afflictions which form part of the education of the race until they attain this happy majority,—canst thou not find part of thy consolation in this glorious



prospect of thy species? From thy corner in the dark vale of the present, let thy sympathetic affections catch a glimpse of the boundless beauty of the future, and rejoice in the telescopic view of millions of thyself, with thy own thoughts and feelings renewed, basking in happiness, and free from all that which clouds thy being. Thou art one small necessary part of the great train of things which is slowly conducting to this consummation; and wouldst thou rather not have been this? Count thy disappointments and pains ever so minutely; is not thy life worth something, if it were only for the sake of looking for a short time upon the glorious spectacle of the universe, and of man's future prospects, with the consciousness that thou bearest a part in the great whole? Thy small atom of experience and action contributes to build up that immense bank, on which will be based the fertile island of man's future perfection. For thy individual self, trust that the wisdom and benevolence which appears in the general arrangements of creation include all that is really wise and benevolent on behalf of individuals. The Creating Mind hath seemed to be not devoid of what is best in the human; trust, then, that there is something in him which looks with peculiar interest on patient suffering worth, and that he hath not neglected to provide for that which would be the first care of a benevolent mortal. Trust in him, and disdain to ask a reward. Feelest thou nothing in thee which prompts thee both to do and suffer in the cause of mankind, without any other reward than what thy own breast affords? Importune not God with mercenary requests to add another mite to thy treasure in heaven; but do good, hoping for nothing again. Let God be witness that thou canst be generous, and do good, without even casting a beggar's look to himself for recompence. Nevertheless, rejoice that all nature proclaims the Creator of sympathizing nature with every generous spirit; and thus learn



to see in all that is serene and lovely in earth and skies the approving smile of heaven.

Fear not, then, to regard this earth as the appointed sphere of man's chief thoughts, exertions, and interests. To enjoy and promote happiness on this planet is the simple and pleasing obligation laid upon him by the Creator through the irresistible voice of his own constitution. If he obey nature, and frame his whole conduct according to her easy command, developed in details as enlightened intellect may suggest, he is sure to be promoting the end of his being. Man is no exception to the rule of animated existence; the work for which he was created, he is also impelled to perform by nature's pleasing enforcements. Away with the glooms of false religion, austerities, seclusions, useless self-denials, and voluntary martyrdoms: God, through nature, *commands man to lead a happy life*. Obey God thyself, and assist others to obey him. In alternate study, action, business, sport, or repose, regulated according to the index of understanding placed in thyself for the purpose, let the consciousness of thy pleasing obedience diffuse a perpetual sunshine over the path of life. Indulge thyself especially, as far as it is given thee, in the enjoyment which God himself seems to delight in, of creating happiness. And when the foreseen signal of departure arrives, give a glance of contented retrospection on a well-spent and well-enjoyed life, welcome the new comers into thy place, and sink peacefully into nature's arms.

More is there than this? Nature is silent. Enough has she given man to occupy him on earth; she withdraws not yet the veil from what lies beyond, but bids him wait in calm implicit faith. Or if, pressed urgently by the affections which she herself has implanted in him, man seems to acquire a right to some answer, and demands if the friend of many years is now really no more than a remembrance,—she points with quiet signi-

ficance to man's own heart, and to her own continual lesson, that the creator of that heart is good. Man takes consolation from the hint : amongst the white memorials of mortality he finds thought still pleasing, though solemn and severe, and, amidst yew and cypress shades, catches animating glimpses of the remote bright stars and serene heaven. Spirits of the wise and good ! noblest work of all creation ! are ye not worth preserving in the sight of God ? The wisdom and benevolence which shine forth in all that we can already see of the universe, suggest, that for you there is still some place to occupy, and some work to be done, in the immense regions of the unseen.

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Nature thus can never fail to speak philosophy and religion to those who intently seek her ; and to her great revelation must all mankind ultimately recur.

The various existing religions, in so far as they are based upon fictitious revelations, lose authority by every addition made to man's knowledge and powers of thought ; numbers must, therefore, fall off from every sect into the increasing multitude of those who seek for truth in Nature, and admit the authority of her volume alone.

If names be necessary, let **THEISM** compendiously express the opinions of those who seek God in his works alone.

Of these, many, from attachment to the faith of their forefathers, from respect for the man who, in an early

age, breathed forth so much of the pure spirit of religion and benevolence, and from reverence for that faith which, when viewed apart from the vices of its professors, has done much to humanize mankind,—may wish to retain the name of Christian. There is no incongruity in the junction. Christ was a Theist, inasmuch as he drew much of his doctrine from his own observation of God's works. And the Theist who imbibes the love of God and of man from the same source, often finds himself almost unconsciously adopting the words of Christ. Let **CHRISTIAN THEISM** then express the feelings of him, who, whilst he admits no authority above that of man's reason, and no revelation besides that of nature, yet listens to and honours one of the best expounders of God and Nature in the Man of Nazareth.

Theists of every nation, Christian, Jew, Mahometan, or Chinese, can meet upon common ground. Whatever minor predilection each may entertain for his own most eminent teacher or prophet, whether Christ, Mahomet, Moses, or Confucius, their great principle is the same,—to seek the knowledge of the Universal Mind, and rules for the guidance of man, in the great volume stretched out before all men. And when men come generally to discover that all have been thus set on a level for the acquisition of this knowledge, religion, instead of being allied with ignorance, exclusiveness, and dogmatism, will be found in closest union with modesty, benevolence, and science. No longer will it be supposed to consist in absurd tales and incomprehensible mysteries, but it will be the expression of Nature's highest truths, and the hymn ascending from a grateful Earth to a beneficent Heaven.

## APPENDIX.

Page 11.—*The name which, in reference to the future kingdom, was assumed by him.*

It is generally agreed by Christian commentators that the word Christ, *Χριστος*, signifies *anointed*, and is synonymous with the Hebrew or Syriac *Messias*, derived from *maschach*, to anoint.

Martinii Lexicon Philologicum:—" *Χριστος* is the participle from *Χρίω*, in the same way as *unctus*, from *ungo*. Irenæus, l. 3, cap. 20: 'In Christi nomine subauditur qui unxit, et ipse unctus est, et ipsa unctio,' &c. *Messias* is a Syriac word with a Greek termination."

Stephani Thesaurus on the word *Χριστος*:—"Our Saviour is pre-eminently designated by this name in the sense known to the Jews, since he was, in truth, Priest, Prophet, and King. For, amongst them, those three classes of men alone used to be anointed with sacred oil, as appears from Leviticus xvi. 10, which treats of the anointing of the High Priest; 1st Kings, xix., the anointing of Elisha as prophet in the room of Elijah; and 1 Samuel, x., the anointing of Saul as King of the Israelites. See also the anointing of David as King, 1 Sam. xvi., 2 Sam. ii. & v.; and of Solomon, 1 Kings, i.\* The Latin writers preferred to retain the Greek appellation *Christus* rather than to substitute the Latin *unctus* or *delibutus*. Lactantius says, lib. iv. cap. 7, "But the meaning of the name must be explained on account of the error of those ignorant persons, who, by changing a letter, call it *Chrestus*. The Jews were commanded to make a sacred ointment wherewith to anoint those who were called to the priesthood or the kingdom: and as, now, the purple is the ensign of royalty amongst the Romans, so, amongst them, the anointing with the sacred ointment conferred the royal name and authority. But since the ancient Greeks used the verb *Χρίσθαι* for *to be anointed*, instead of the present one *αλείφεισθαι*, we call him *Christus*, i. e. anointed, which, in Hebrew, is *Messiah*. Whence it is, that in some Greek scriptures,

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\* *Χριστος* applied to Cyrus, Isaiah xlv. 1.



translated badly from the Hebrew, we find written *ηλειμενος*, i. e. *ungendo curatus*, from *αλειφεισθαι*. However, either word signifies a King ; not, indeed, that he obtained an earthly kingdom, the time for which is not yet come, but a heavenly and eternal one.' In the New Testament, the word *Χριστος* occurs frequently, both by itself and in conjunction with Jesus, as *Ιησους ο Χριστος*. In Daniel ix. it stands alone, *εως Χριστου ηγυμηνε*, unto Christ the Prince : where also it is said, *τε σφραγισαι ορασιν και προφητειαν και τε χρισαι αγιον αγιον*, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and anoint the holy of holies."

Stephanus gives abundant instances of the use of the verb *χρισω*, and of its derivatives, *χριστος*, *χρισμα*, &c., in the sense of anointing or smearing, *ungo*, *lino*, seu *perungo*, *inungo*, *oblino*, *illino*, amongst Greek authors, viz. : Homer, Xenophon, Euripides, Theocritus, Dioscorides, Philoxenus, &c.

The Jews applied the term *Messiah*, or *anointed*, to their expected deliverer long before Jesus appeared. The Septuagint, made about three centuries before his time, gives *χριστος* as the translation of this word, and the verb *χρισω*, with its derivations used in a similar sense, was very common amongst Greek authors from the earliest times. The origin of the application of the name Christ to Jesus seems, therefore, to be very satisfactorily established, in conformity with the unanimous testimony of the Christian church.

But Volney, Dupuis, and others, neglect this derivation of the name, and suppose it to be a corruption of some ancient appellation of the Sun. Volney says, ch. xxii. sect. 13, "The mythological traditions maintain that he (the Sun) was called sometimes *Chris*, or *Conservator* ; and hence the Hindoo God, *Chris-en* or *Christna* ; and the Christian *Chris-tos*, the Son of Mary ;" which is supported thus in a note, "*Chris*, or *Conservator*. The Greeks used to express by X, the aspirated *hâ* of the Orientals, who said *hâris*. In Hebrew, *heres* signifies the sun ; but, in Arabic, the meaning of the radical word is, to guard, to preserve, and of *hâris*, guardian, preserver."

This is far from satisfactory, and cannot set aside the clear explanation quoted above ; even though we should admit that some of the traditions respecting the Divinities representing the Sun came to be applied to Jesus Christ.

Of the Hindoo God *Crishna*, Sir W. Jones gives the following account (Works, 4to, vol. i. p. 278) : "That the name of *Crishna*, and the general outline of his story, were long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of Homer, we know very certainly.\*

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\* In Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 426, he gives some reasons for fixing the date of *Crishna*'s appearance, real or imagined, about 1200 years before Christ.

Yet the celebrated poem entitled *Bhágavat*,\* which contains a prolix account of his life, is filled with narratives of a most extraordinary kind, but strangely variegated and intermixed with poetical decorations. The incarnate deity of the Sanscrit romance was cradled among herdsmen; he was educated among them, and passed his youth in playing with milkmaids. A tyrant, at the time of his birth, ordered all new-born male infants to be slain; yet this wonderful babe was preserved in an extraordinary manner from a nurse commissioned to kill him. He performed amazing but ridiculous miracles in his infancy, and, at the age of seven years, held up a mountain on the tip of his little finger: he saved multitudes, partly by his arms and partly by his miraculous powers; he raised the dead by descending for that purpose to the lowest regions; he was the meekest and best-tempered of beings, washed the feet of the Brahmans, and preached very nobly indeed, and sublimely, but always in their favour; he was pure in reality, but exhibited an appearance of libertinism; lastly, he was benevolent and tender, yet fomented and conducted a terrible war. This motley story must induce an opinion that the spurious gospels which abounded in the first age of Christianity had been brought to India, and the wildest parts of them repeated to the Hindoos, who engrafted them on the old fable of *Cesava*, the Apollo of Greece." He says, in another place, that the meaning of the word *Crishna* is *dark-blue*, approaching to *black*, which is supposed to have been his complexion; and hence the large bee of that colour is consecrated to him.

Captain Wilford adds to the foregoing account, "The Yadus, his own tribe and nation, were doomed to destruction for their sins;" and "the real name of *Crishna* was *Caneya*, and he was surnamed *Crishna*, or the *black*, on account of his complexion."

From all this there appears no reason to suppose that the name *Christ* was borrowed from *Crishna*, or that the two had a common origin. *Christos*, in Greek, signified *anointed*; and *Crishna*, with the Hindoos, *black*. The many rude resemblances between the story of the Hindoo God, and the Gospel accounts of *Jesus*, especially that of *Matthew*, may be explained by supposing that the similarity of the names, of itself a mere coincidence, led both the Hindoos and the Christians to borrow from each other, parts of the stories relating to the two objects of worship. It seems probable, however, that in the greater part of these resemblances the Hindoos were the plagiarists.

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\* The *Bhágavat* is the last of the eighteen Puranas, of which Captain Wilford says (*Essay on the Origin and Decline of the Christian Religion in India*, Asiatic Researches, vol. x.), "Every one of the Puranas is much later than our æra; though many legends, and the materials in general, certainly existed before, in some other shape."

Page 37.—*In what language should God have written his message?*

“Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament ; au lieu de répandre sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eût-il pas été plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire, et si bien intentionné pour l'homme, d'écrire d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes, en caractères ineffaçables, et lisibles également pour tous les habitans de la terre ?”—*Système de la Nature*.

Page 49.—*Some principle not manifesting itself apart from matter.*

The objections of reputed Atheists apply chiefly to the idea of a Demi-urgus or creating God, distinct from the universe itself. Shelley says that his negation of a God must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity, and that the hypothesis of a pervading Spirit, coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken.

Theism is not limited to the belief in an artificer who, at a certain time, created the material world from nothing. It recognizes an intelligent principle, which causes material things to be in the form which we see ; but whether this principle operates by successive acts of creation, or by a perpetually influencing presence, or both, is a separate and more difficult consideration. The Soul or Spirit of the Universe, considered as a mind animating and regulating it, as the human mind does the body, is an idea which gives rise to the religious sentiments, in as great a degree, probably, as that of a strictly creative agent.

Page 59.—*Dante relates, &c.*

On referring to the passage, *Paradiso*, Canto 33, after this note was gone to press, I have found that the meaning of Dante was, probably, to shadow forth the second person of the Trinity. He would, doubtless, excuse an inaccuracy which makes his splendid imagery serve a further purpose than it was at first intended for.

Page 65.—*The zeal which wastes itself in mis-directed missionary exertion.*

Sir W. Jones says (*Works*, vol. i. p. 279), “As to the general extension of our pure faith in Hindostan, there are at present many sad obstacles to it. The Mussulmen are already a sort of heterodox Christians : they are



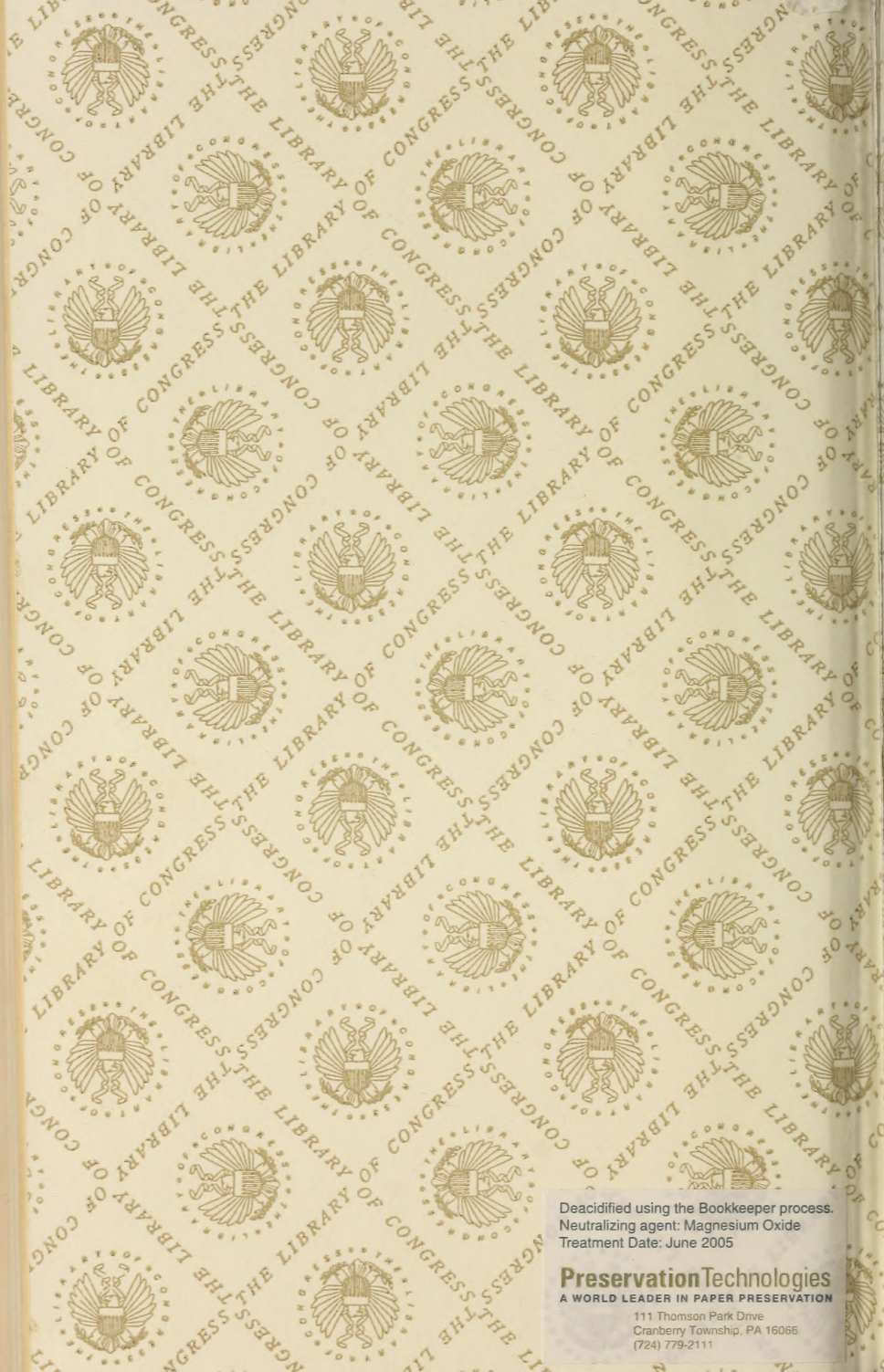
Christians, if Locke reasons justly, because they believe firmly the immaculate conception, divine character, and miracles of the Messiah; but they are heterodox in denying vehemently his character of Son, and his equality as God with the Father, of whose unity and attributes they entertain and express the most awful ideas; while they consider our doctrine as perfect blasphemy, and insist that our copies of the Scriptures have been corrupted both by Jews and Christians. It will be inexpressibly difficult to undeceive them, and scarcely possible to diminish their veneration for Mohammed and Ali, who were both very extraordinary men, and the second a man of unexceptionable morals. The Koran shines, indeed, with a borrowed light, since most of its beauties are taken from our Scriptures; but it has great beauties, and the Mussulmen will not be convinced that they were borrowed. The Hindoos, on the other hand, would readily admit the truth of the Gospel; but they contend that it is perfectly consistent with their Sastras: the Deity, they say, has appeared innumerable times, in many parts of this world, and of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and though we adore him in one appearance, and they in another, yet we adore, they say, the same God, to whom our several worships, though different in form, are equally acceptable, if they be sincere in substance. We may assure ourselves, that neither Mussulmen nor Hindoos will ever be converted by any mission from the church of Rome, or any church; and the only human mode, perhaps, of causing so great a revolution, will be to translate into Sanscrit and Persian such chapters of the Prophets, particularly of Isaiah, as are indisputably evangelical, together with one of the Gospels, and a plain prefatory discourse containing full evidence of the very distant ages in which the predictions themselves, and the history of the divine person predicted, were made public; and then quietly to disperse the work among the well-educated natives, with whom, if in due time it failed of producing very salutary fruit by its natural influence, we could only lament more than ever the strength of prejudice, and the weakness of unassisted reason."











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